ACTION TOGETHER CIO

England & Wales · Charity number 1165512

Details

Other names	ACTION TOGETHER
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2016-02-10
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Action Together CIO 80 Union Street Oldham OL1 1DJ
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Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE:(1) TO PROMOTE ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC, PRINCIPALLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF OLDHAM AND TAMESIDE AND THESURROUNDING AREA (HEREINAFTER CALLED THE “AREA OF BENEFIT”) AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH THE NECESSARY SUPPORT, INFORMATION AND SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO PURSUE OR CONTRIBUTE TO ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSE.(2) TO PROMOTE, ORGANISE AND FACILITATE CO-OPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING BETWEEN THIRD SECTOR, STATUTORY AND OTHER RELEVANT BODIES IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ABOVE PURPOSES WITHIN THE AREA OF BENEFIT.(3) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS CLAUSE:(A) “THIRD SECTOR” MEANS CHARITIES, VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES;(B) “CHARITIES” ARE ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED FOR EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLEPURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW OF ENGLAND AND WALES;(C) “VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES” ARE INDEPENDENTORGANISATIONS, WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED FOR PURPOSES THAT ADD VALUE TO THECOMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, OR A SIGNIFICANT SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY, AND WHICHARE NOT PERMITTED BY THEIR CONSTITUTION TO MAKE A PROFIT FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES DO NOT INCLUDE LOCALGOVERNMENT OR OTHER STATUTORY AUTHORITIES.

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Activities: Action Together CIO is the infrastucture organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. We connect people with what's happening in their community, develop community ideas into action, strengthen local organisations, and provide strategic influence for the charity and voluntary sector.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Oldham
- Rochdale
- Tameside

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£8,030,947	£6,341,410	£6,704,188	79
2024-03-31	£6,361,207	£6,244,347	£5,015,867	89
2023-03-31	£6,521,140	£6,405,881	£4,890,976	81
2022-03-31	£6,911,412	£6,068,141	£4,744,038	84
2021-03-31	£4,753,783	£4,009,572	£3,826,491	73

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Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
MS CAMILLA GUERECA	Chair	2016-02-10
Affy Rasheed		2025-11-05
Andrew Wiggans		2019-10-17
Aqub Nazir		2024-11-12
Danial Georgiev		2025-11-05
Dewan Choudhury		2024-11-12
Jackie McCann		2025-11-05
Mark Widdup		2024-11-12
Martin Ashton		2024-11-12
Mina Patel		2023-12-06
Mohammed Miah		2025-11-05
Naila Akhter		2021-05-20

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ACTION TOGETHER CIO

England & Wales - Charity number 1165512

Accounts

Charity number: 1165512

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

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Annual report 2024/2025

Highlights of our impact in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

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1. Introduction from our Chair

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I reflect on another remarkable year for Action Together. The 2024/2025 period has been one of both significant achievement and profound challenge, and through it all, our team, partners, and communities have demonstrated unwavering resilience, creativity, and compassion.

This year, we deepened our impact across Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside, supporting over 1,200 organisations with tailored capacity building support, delivering over 130 training sessions, and directing over £1.85 million into the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector. These investments enabled grassroots groups to respond to urgent needs – from food insecurity and health inequalities to youth engagement and social isolation – while building long-term sustainability and developing leadership within our communities.

Volunteering remains at the heart of our mission. Over 2,000 people registered to volunteer through Action Together, and our place-based Volunteer Hubs, fairs, and outreach efforts have brought opportunities closer to where people live and work. We've seen volunteering transform lives, helping people gain confidence, skills, and even employment. Stories like the ones in this report remind us of the power of connection and the importance of inclusive, accessible pathways into volunteering.

We were delighted to achieve the Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation (LIQA), a nationally recognised standard that affirms the strength, effectiveness, and integrity of our work as an infrastructure organisation. It is a testament to the dedication of our staff and trustees, and to the trust placed in us by our members and partners. Achieving LIQA not only validates our approach but also strengthens our ability to advocate for and invest in the sector we serve.

We also strengthened our role as a strategic leader and advocate. Through initiatives like Live Well, our work with the GM VCFSE Leadership Group, and our leadership in the 10GM collaboration, we've ensured that the voice of the sector is heard and valued in shaping health, economic, and social policy across Greater Manchester. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion has remained central, with targeted support for marginalised communities and a strong stance for inclusion and against racism and hate.

Of course, this year has not been without its difficulties. Reductions in funding, particularly in Tameside, meant we had to make tough decisions, including saying goodbye to valued colleagues. Yet even in these moments, our team responded with dedication and care, ensuring continuity of support and finding new ways to connect people with opportunities.

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees, and partners. To our team – thank you for your tireless work, your belief in people and communities, and your commitment to making a difference. To the local organisations we support – you make our communities stronger, and we are honoured to work alongside you. And to our funders and partners – thank you for your trust and collaboration.

As we look ahead, we remain guided by our strategy and values. We will continue to invest in community power, champion social justice, and work together to build a fairer, more connected future. Thank you for being part of Action Together.

Camilla Guereca, Chair, Action Together

2. Who we are and what we do

Action Together is the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside.

We connect people with what's happening in their community, develop community ideas into action, strengthen local organisations, and provide strategic influence for the charity and voluntary sector. Membership of Action Together is free and open to any voluntary organisation, charity or social enterprise in Oldham, Rochdale, or Tameside.

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies, and roles.

We provide support for voluntary, community and charity organisations to establish, develop, and build their capacity including specialist information, advice, and training for staff, volunteers and trustees.

Action Together works in partnership with other charities, infrastructure organisations and public bodies and collaborates on key thematic work. We also lead and advocate for the work of organisations locally, and across Greater Manchester and the wider area.

We invest in the sector, and members can apply for funding from our grants programmes. We also provide support for groups seeking and applying for investment, and direct members to appropriate sources of funding.

3. Our Year in Numbers

- 2,188 people registered to volunteer through Action Together
- We provided 1,239 organisations with one-to-one capacity building support, advice and mentoring
- We hosted 133 training sessions and events
- 1,179 people attended our training and events
- 1,368 people took part in our partnership and thematic networks
- We directed over £1.85 million into the sector
- 634 local organisations benefitted from funding we provided
- 2,796 people were referred through our Oldham Social Prescribing service

4. Volunteering

2,188 people in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside registered to volunteer through Action Together.

We are the accredited Volunteer Centre for Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, and hold the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation – the quality mark for organisations who are proven in delivering the five local Volunteer Centre functions:

Strategic development of volunteering – Increasing the profile and raising awareness of volunteering, and making volunteering more accessible

Good practice and development – Training for volunteers to get ready for volunteering, and training for groups and organisations to get them ready for volunteers

Brokerage – Online and in-person volunteer brokerage of volunteering opportunities delivered from Community Hubs, supported by Volunteer Hub Hosts

Developing volunteering opportunities – Working with our member organisations to develop their volunteer roles and processes

Voice of volunteering – Sharing the stories and impact of volunteers in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

How we've developed our Volunteering service in 2024/25:

1. Strengthening Place-Based Volunteering

Action Together's place-based model brought volunteering closer to communities, volunteers and voluntary organisations:

- **Volunteer Hubs** continued to engage people in the places they live and work. We launched new hubs in leisure centres and community venues, including working with British Red Cross in Oldham on a bespoke hub for asylum seekers and refugees.
- **Volunteer Fairs** in person and online connected hundreds of residents with diverse roles. We record our online Volunteer Fairs for those who can't attend: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uswHqdoy3I

"It's great to be here today to see all of the volunteer opportunities available to the people of Oldham and the amazing work these voluntary organisations do".

- Oldham Deputy Mayor, Councillor Eddie Moores

"The location was great – a lot of footfall. And Action Together were brilliant, so helpful and friendly."

"I attended the Volunteer fair because as well as looking for a part time job, I am looking to volunteer. It was amazing! I learned a lot of new things about what you can do. I enjoyed meeting new people. I didn't want to go home!"

“Great session, lovely to hear what else is going on locally and meet potential volunteers; it felt like a very worthwhile event.”

We asked our voluntary member organisations who joined us at our Volunteer Fair in May 2024 what volunteering means to them... here's what they said!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsO5AvyhTp4

Due to the previous year’s reduction in funding for our Tameside service, we said goodbye to two of our Volunteering Officers this year. This has meant a pause in our Volunteer Hubs in Tameside, as we encouraged groups to use our online Volunteering Directory and support to promote their roles. Thank you to our Volunteering team for the years of dedication and hard work they put into supporting and growing volunteering in Tameside.

Case Study – In My Shoes Theatre

In My Shoes Theatre (IMST) Group is a community theatre company based in Oldham, offering creative opportunities for young adults aged 18–32 with learning and physical disabilities. As the group grew, founder Emily recognised the need to recruit volunteers to support their inclusive theatre sessions – but had no prior experience in doing so.

Through Action Together’s place-based approach, Emily was connected to our Volunteering team via our local Capacity Building team. This local connection ensured that support was tailored to IMST’s specific needs and rooted in the Oldham community.

Working closely with Emily, we co-developed a volunteering programme from the ground up. This included creating a volunteer policy, role descriptions, a recruitment and induction process, and identifying training needs. Emily was introduced to our Volunteer Manager Zone, a digital toolkit designed to support local organisations. We guided her through templates and provided feedback on draft documents, working at her pace and offering one-to-one support throughout to create a programme and Volunteer Handbook.

Once the programme was in place, we helped IMST develop a local recruitment strategy, promoting roles through our online brokerage platform, social media, and partnerships with Oldham College’s Health & Social Care programmes. We also supported Emily through the interview and DBS process, ensuring a safe and welcoming experience for new volunteers.

IMST has now successfully recruited its first Creative Support Volunteers, who help facilitate theatre sessions and build a strong, supportive community.

“We’re like a family,” Emily shared. “The support from Action Together made us feel we weren’t alone. Creating our own Volunteer Handbook made us feel professional and established.”

This collaboration highlights the power of local, place-based support in helping grassroots organisations grow sustainably and inclusively.

2. Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusion

We focused on removing barriers to volunteering, including:

- Our relaunched website features an enhanced Volunteering Directory, and additional resources, information and support to make volunteering roles more accessible
- An audit of volunteer roles we host on our online directory ensured accurate information on accessibility and inclusion
- We created pathways into volunteering for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, including tailored support for volunteers. Through funding available through the Asylum Dispersal Grant, we developed a partnership with the British Red Cross and volunteer-involving organisations in Oldham to support recruitment of volunteers from the asylum seeker and refugee community

Case study: Supporting Asylum Seekers & Refugees into Volunteering

Action Together, in partnership with the British Red Cross, hosts a fortnightly Volunteer Hub at Oldham Baptist Church. These sessions offer asylum seekers and refugees a welcoming space to connect with local services and explore volunteering opportunities. In October 2024, Volunteering Officer Lauren met Butan, an Arabic-speaking person seeking asylum who was feeling isolated and eager to improve his English, meet new people, and find meaningful ways to spend his time.

Lauren introduced Butan to the idea of volunteering as a way to build confidence, develop language skills, and feel more connected to the community. They discussed his interests, availability, and travel limitations, as well as the kind of support he might need due to language barriers. Taking a strengths-based approach, Lauren focused on Butan's enthusiasm for outdoor, hands-on work and his desire to be part of a team.

After exploring several options, Butan chose to volunteer at Wildbrook Community Food Growing Hub. Lauren supported him through every step—helping him plan his journey, providing a map, and even offering to accompany him to his first session to ease his anxiety. This thoughtful support helped Butan feel more confident and comfortable in a new environment.

Butan now volunteers regularly at the hub, balancing it with his English classes at Oldham College. A few weeks into his placement, he sent a heartfelt message to Lauren: "My volunteer work is great. I am very happy with this. This was all because of your abilities. Thank you very much. I really enjoy working as part of a team and being around my new friends."

This case highlights how tailored, compassionate support can support people seeking asylum to thrive through volunteering, fostering inclusion, skill-building, and a sense of belonging in their new community.

3. Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment

Volunteering was used to build employability:

- We supported JobCentre clients across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside into volunteering, with several securing paid roles as a result
- We developed and created new relationships with local JobCentres, where Job Coaches could book time with our Volunteering Officers to refer their clients for a session on volunteering
- In Oldham, Local Motion funded a JobCentre Pilot and, with support from Oldham's Positive Action Network (OPAN), we were successful in applying for funding to continue this project until December 2027. This will allow us to build on the work of the foundations of the pilot and identify longer-term outcomes.

Case Study – Adeela

Adeela first connected with Action Together's Volunteering Support Officer, Asma, seeking a flexible volunteering role to gain experience as a Teaching Assistant while balancing her responsibilities as a mother. She hoped to build her confidence and strengthen her CV for future employment.

Asma supported Adeela in securing a volunteer position with the Girls Friendly Society (GFS) in Heywood. The role was ideal—it offered the flexibility Adeela needed and even allowed her young daughter to participate alongside her. This inclusive opportunity helped Adeela feel supported both personally and professionally.

Adeela shared how much the experience meant to her: "I feel more confident... I really appreciated how you listened to my concerns and validated me. I feel like I can approach you with any sort of problem and know that you're invested in helping me find a solution."

Four months later, Asma visited Adeela at GFS and saw her thriving during a festive session decorating Christmas trees and cookies. GFS Group Leader Elicia praised Adeela's dedication, creativity, and growing confidence: "She connects well with the girls, supports them actively, and has even started suggesting her own activity ideas. She's hardworking, reliable, and a joy to work with."

In addition to her role at GFS, Adeela also volunteered at a local café. These experiences helped her build valuable skills, gain references, and ultimately secure paid employment in a primary school canteen. Reflecting on her journey, Adeela said, "Volunteer work helps a lot to find paid work because you build confidence, gain knowledge, and it's easy to get references. It helped me a lot, and I really enjoyed it."

Adeela's story highlights how tailored volunteering opportunities can empower individuals to grow, gain experience, and transition successfully into employment, all while feeling supported and valued.

Case Study – Jon at Hopwood Hall:

Jon was referred to Action Together by Middleton Job Centre while seeking full-time cleaning work, but lacked experience and qualifications.

After struggling to find opportunities, our Volunteer Support Officer Phil identified a potential placement at Hopwood Hall, a local venue without a cleaner. Phil contacted them to highlight the mutual benefits of Jon volunteering there. Hopwood Hall agreed, and Jon began volunteering two days a week, taking on tasks like cleaning, gardening, and weeding.

Initially nervous, Jon felt reassured by Phil's clear guidance and support. He quickly settled in, built strong relationships with colleagues, and expressed how much he enjoys the role. Volunteering has helped Jon gain practical skills, knowledge, and confidence. He described the experience as "brilliant… it's a wonderful place to work", crediting Phil for finding the perfect placement.

Jon's story highlights how volunteering can be a valuable stepping stone toward employment and personal growth, especially for those facing barriers to work.

4. Community Engagement and Outreach

Outreach expanded through schools, libraries, and events:

- We continued to develop our relationships with schools and colleges, attending career events to speak to young people about the benefits of volunteering. We shared these benefits, how we can support students and selected appropriate roles in Student Volunteering Week: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/student-volunteering-week-2025
- Our in-person and online Volunteer Fairs engaged the public directly with our Volunteering service and gave people the chance to speak to local voluntary organisations
- Our monthly Volunteer ebulletin continued to grow in popularity, now reaching 5,706 people with an additional 810 sign ups across the year. The ebulletin highlights volunteer opportunities, themed recommendations, events, training, news, resources and job listings to support people in their volunteer journey
- The Know Your Neighbourhood project with Tameside Libraries connected residents with local opportunities to increase volunteering activity and reduce social isolation. Our Volunteering team were based in libraries across Tameside for the six month project to help residents find the right role for them

Case Study – Student Volunteering with Connie

Connie, a student at Oldham College, chose to complete her voluntary work placement at Alexandra Park's Community Food Growing Hub. Drawn by her love for the outdoors and a desire to give back to the community, Connie has embraced a hands-on role that includes harvesting plants, cleaning around the allotments, and occasionally assisting with park maintenance.

Through her volunteering, Connie has gained valuable experience and personal growth. She shared that the role has significantly boosted her confidence, saying, “I feel a lot more confident because I’m happy when I’m helping out and learning new things.” Her positive attitude and willingness to learn have made her a valued part of the hub’s team.

Connie also offered thoughtful advice to others considering volunteering: “Take your time to find somewhere that you feel happiest, because when you do it feels really good to enjoy your role, whilst helping your community!”

Her story highlights the benefits of student volunteering—not only in developing practical skills and confidence but also in fostering a strong sense of community connection. Connie’s journey is a great example of how young people can make a meaningful impact while gaining experience that supports both personal and professional development.

Case Study – Joanne

After seeing a Facebook post about the Know Your Neighbourhood project, Joanne visited the Action Together team at Stalybridge Library for an informal chat. The library hosts Time for a Rhyme sessions, and we quickly connected Joanne with the project and she soon began volunteering there. She found the experience both socially enriching and a meaningful way to give back.

“I visited Stalybridge Library as I wanted to find out more about volunteering in Tameside. I have recently finished working and wanted to use my time more usefully, so I decided that volunteering would be a good way to do this,” Joanne shared.

She added, “Your contribution, however small you think it is, can make the world of difference to another person. Volunteering allows you to meet different people, so it provides a positive social experience, too.”

Many of our volunteers are looking for ways to apply their skills and interests after retirement, as well as create social connections and create opportunities to make a difference in their local community.

5. Celebrating the Impact of Volunteering

Events and campaigns recognised volunteer contributions:

- Extensive Volunteers’ Week celebrations included roadshows and a Trustee Fair, with support from our own Trustees
- We celebrated International Volunteer Day by sharing stories from our volunteers across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, highlighting the essential work they do and their commitment to the community: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/international-volunteer-day-2024

- Our popular annual Volunteer Celebration Fund supported voluntary groups to host their own volunteer celebrations across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside
- Our annual Tameside Toy Appeal collected over 7,500 toys, supported 1,142 children and raised £2,960. Thank you to all our volunteers, partners, and everyone who donated to the appeal https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QynHqWHcquU

Case Study – Ming's Story

Ming (Wendy) has been in the UK for 18 years since moving here from China. We matched Ming with Middleton Wellbeing Centre and Café, operated by Rochdale and District Mind.

Read Ming's story and watch a video to find out more about the centre: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/rochdale-volunteering-mings-story

Case Study – Terrence

After experiencing a personal crisis and feeling isolated, Terrence reached out to Action Together to find a way to reconnect with others and use his time meaningfully. During a supportive conversation about his interests and goals, the team identified The Together Centre as a great fit for him.

Terrence began volunteering in the centre's community garden, which helped him get outdoors, meet new people, and feel part of something positive. He later expanded his involvement by becoming a buddy at another local organisation, The Shed.

"I met with Action Together, who talked me through my options, gave me a tour of the centre and introduced me to lots of people. I filled in my volunteer application form the same day and began volunteering the next week.

"The thing I enjoy most about volunteering is the people that I am getting to spend time with. Everyone here is really friendly. I didn't realise that the Together Centre did so much and supported so many people, either. I get to see the great work they do and the difference that they make through my volunteering, and I find it very rewarding being a part of that."

Terrence's story highlights how volunteering can help individuals overcome isolation, build social connections, and regain a sense of purpose through meaningful community involvement.

6. Strategic Partnerships

Collaborations enhanced our reach and impact:

- Partnerships with the British Red Cross, PossAbilities, Ingeus, and Jobcentres supported targeted recruitment.
- Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) partnerships with local businesses enhanced community engagement. We met local businesses to discuss volunteering and shared

with them how it could be a way to enhance their work and provide volunteers with valuable experience.

- We developed our own internal ESV policy to allow staff to take up to three days of paid leave per year to engage in voluntary work with a local organisation. This has allowed all our staff team to get involved in volunteering, and led to increased engagement between our staff and the voluntary groups we support. Find out how our Volunteering team got stuck in at the Alexandra Park Hub in Oldham: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/volunteer-voices-2024-meet-action-together
- Retail partnerships led to streamlined volunteer placements, including developing an agreement with all 23 branches of charity shops in Rochdale to collaborate with Action Together on volunteer recruitment. These organisations were particularly drawn to our approach, which reduces the stress of recruitment by offering in-person applicant meetings and precise role specifications advertised on our website. As a result, volunteers understand exactly what is expected of them, leading to more committed and informed placements.

Case Study – Slawomir

Slawomir attended an Ingeus Employability event to explore ways to improve his job prospects and conversational English. He connected with Action Together, who helped him register and explore suitable volunteering opportunities. Slawomir chose to volunteer at the Get Free Books Charity Shop in Hyde, where he could gain valuable customer service experience and improve his English in a practical setting.

Volunteering at the shop every Wednesday, Slawomir helps sort and shelve book donations – an active role that also gives him access to a wide range of free books to support his language learning. “I’m really enjoying volunteering,” he shared. “I’m getting lots of exercise going up and down the stairs with all the books, too!”

Dave, the Lead Volunteer, praised Slawomir’s reliability and contribution: “He’s a huge help – we could do with more volunteers like him!”

Slawomir’s story highlights how volunteering can build skills, confidence, and community connections.

5. Capacity Building

- We provided 1,239 organisations with one-to-one capacity building support, advice and mentoring
- We hosted 133 training sessions and events
- 1,179 people attended our training and events

Empowering Communities and Strengthening the Social Economy

In 2024–25, Action Together continued to build the strength and sustainability of the VCFSE sector across Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside. Our work focused on direct support, digital transformation, leadership development, and a strong emphasis on growing the social economy.

Through our integrated approach to capacity building and social enterprise development, we are helping to create a more resilient, innovative, and sustainable VCFSE sector. Our support enables local organisations to grow their impact, secure funding, and build stronger communities.

1. Direct Support and Training

- Provided 1,239 organisations with one-to-one support, including mentoring, governance advice, and funding guidance.
- Delivered 133 training sessions to 1,179 participants, ranging from in-person to hybrid and online to ensure accessibility.
- Launched our new Training calendar, responding to member needs with additional topics, scheduling sessions at different times and further in advance, and repeating our most popular training more frequently to ensure more people can attend.
- Training topics included safeguarding, digital marketing, impact measurement, financial management, and bid writing.
- Hosted new and ongoing networks and events to connect local organisations with support and each other.
- Developed and launched new toolkits including governance, finance, Theory of Change, and marketing.
- Developed our Organisation Health Checks to diagnose an organisation's current status and areas it can focus on and supplemented with a new Social Enterprise Health Check and Toolkit.
- Continued to deliver our Quality in Action Award to organisations across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Case study: Green Horizons North West

Green Horizons North West is a pioneering initiative focused on creating educational and employment opportunities for people who experience marginalisation and identify as neurodiverse. In its early stages, the group had established key infrastructure, including polytunnels, outdoor growing areas, a food service trailer, and a classroom. To grow their impact, they needed support in expanding their reach, securing funding, and building strategic partnerships.

Action Together's Community Development Worker provided tailored guidance to support their development. This included recommending and assisting with registration as a Community Interest Company (CIC), aligning with their social and environmental mission. Extensive research was conducted to identify suitable grant opportunities, and the team was supported in attending local networking events to connect with potential partners and funders.

One-on-one training helped build the team's confidence in networking, grant writing, and fundraising. As a result, Green Horizons North West formed a partnership with a local community centre, strengthened relationships with stakeholders, and empowered their team to represent the organisation effectively.

This case highlights how targeted support can help grassroots organisations formalise their structure, access funding, and build the confidence and connections needed to thrive and deliver lasting community impact.

Case study: Darnhill Food Pantry

In early 2024, the Darnhill Food Pantry underwent a significant transition, separating from the Restoring Hope Community Organisation and welcoming new leadership following the Chair's resignation due to ill health. Throughout this period of change, Community Development Worker Fi provided ongoing support.

Most recently, Fi conducted a Healthcheck with the group to assess their policy portfolio and identify areas for development. This process highlighted the organisation's strengths and helped create a clear action plan for future growth.

The support has been instrumental in guiding the Pantry through change and positioning it for continued community impact.

Case study: Dementia in Action

Dementia in Action is a volunteer-led community group that provides vital support for people living with dementia and their carers across Tameside. Through a variety of activities, the group helps individuals affected by dementia lead fuller, happier lives. To sustain and grow their services, they regularly seek small funding opportunities.

Marion, a key member of the group, works closely with Action Together's Community Development Worker to access funding, build partnerships, and connect with other local services. This collaboration has helped Dementia in Action expand its reach and strengthen its support network.

Action Together also play a key role in facilitating partnerships with local stakeholders and community groups, enhancing the overall dementia support offer in Tameside. We also work with carers, offering guidance and resources to help them in their roles.

Recently, the group received the NHS Covid Vaccination Grant and participated in the *Get Strong Winter* campaign, raising awareness about winter vaccinations—crucial for people with dementia who often have underlying health conditions.

Marion shared, “Over the last five years, Action Together has supported us with seed funding to launch three new services. Their guidance has helped us grow into an established grassroots service.”

This story highlights how long-term, tailored support from Action Together has worked alongside Dementia in Action to grow sustainably, adapt to community needs, and continue delivering essential services to one of Tameside’s most vulnerable populations.

2. Digital Transformation and Website Development

Recognising the increasing demand for accessible, online support, Action Together undertook a full redevelopment of its website to better serve members and the wider community.

Key Improvements and Innovations:

- **User-Centred Design**: The new site was developed based on extensive feedback from staff and member organisations, using focus groups, analytics, and behaviour analysis tools. The result is a platform designed around the needs of visitors, not just the services we offer.
- **Borough-Specific Mini-Sites**: Recognising that members identify strongly with their local area, we introduced dedicated mini-sites for **Oldham**, **Rochdale**, and **Tameside**, allowing users to easily access relevant services and information.
- **Enhanced Member Resources Area**: A new section provides downloadable toolkits, templates, videos, and learning materials covering key areas such as volunteering, communications, impact measurement, funding, and finance.
- **Self-Serve Functionality**: Organisations can now manage their own volunteer roles, community activities, and track grant applications directly through the site.
- **Improved Directories**: Upgraded Volunteering, Funding, Events, and Community Activities directories make it easier for users to find opportunities and support.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity**: The site now includes mobile optimisation, language translation, improved navigation, and text descriptions on all images to ensure it is accessible to all users.
- **Content Integration**: Enhanced functionality allows embedding of videos, presentations, and complex documents, making the site a more dynamic and interactive resource hub.

This digital transformation ensures that Action Together’s support is more accessible, responsive, and tailored to the needs of the communities it serves.

We encourage all Action Together members to access their Dashboard through the login on https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/. If you don’t have a login, please contact us at info@actiontogether.org.uk to set one up.

3. Growing the Social Economy: Social Enterprises and Entrepreneurs

Action Together made significant strides in supporting the **social economy**, helping organisations and individuals build sustainable, impact-driven enterprises. We've focused our support on ensuring that people facing the greatest barriers to starting a social enterprise have access to the technical and practical help they need.

Strategic Programmes and Tools

- Rolled out the **Social Enterprise Healthcheck**, developed with Mantle, to help organisations assess strengths and identify areas for development.
- Launched a **Social Enterprise Toolkit** with guidance, activities, and case studies, available through our member portal.
- Delivered the UKSPF-funded **Our Business** programme, offering consultancy, coaching, and training to social enterprises across all three boroughs.

Training and Accelerator Programmes

- Ran multiple training sessions tailored to social economy organisations, including:
    - Building a website for your social enterprise
    - Pricing for sustainability
    - Introduction to accounts and financial management
    - Tendering for public sector contracts
    - Social impact masterclasses
- Delivered **Social Economy Accelerator programmes**, supporting over organisations to develop robust business models, diversify income, and enhance sustainability.
- Launched the **Building Resilient Leaders** programme for **female social entrepreneurs**, focusing on leadership, goal setting, and business planning.

Impact

- **Oldham**: Supported seven social enterprises through the accelerator, with follow-up coaching and business planning support.
- **Rochdale**: Delivered the female social entrepreneur accelerator and supported 11 women-led organisations with specialist consultancy.
- **Tameside**: Five organisations completed the accelerator, with continued support through mentoring and training.

“I have been successful in gaining £18,000 for our church since the start of this course. Having a more organised, structured approach to bids has helped enormously. The course has caused a wider look at organisational culture and where changes can be made.”

- Funding Coaching Programme client

"I have enjoyed the accelerator course, it has been a good mix of different people from different fields. The trainers are knowledgeable and supportive and want the best for the purpose driven businesses we are trying to develop. Lots of first hand experience and tips for the future. I found the follow up one to one session very helpful to focus on specific areas that I needed help with. Thank you."

- The Leap Children and Family Centre

“It's really helped us to reassess where we need to focus and make some big decisions around the sustainability and future of our organisation, it's challenged our thinking along with given us new ideas and alternate ways to do things to save us time and energy, but also ensure that we are aligned with our core values, both professionally and personally. It's actually been REALLY transformational and we've still lots of coaching to go yet!”

- Live Great Adventures CIC

Case study: The Hygge Hub

Founded by local entrepreneur Michelle Claridge, The Hygge Hub began as a freelance wellness venture offering therapeutic services to support mental, emotional, and physical well-being. In 2024, Michelle transitioned the business into a Community Interest Company (CIC) to expand its reach and impact. She approached Action Together’s Community Development Team for guidance and received tailored support throughout the process.

With Action Together’s help, Michelle secured a £500 Seed Fund and a £1,000 Micro Grant, alongside assistance with safeguarding policies. She also applied for the Building Resilient Businesses programme for female social entrepreneurs and completed our tailored Social Enterprise Healthcheck with support from Community Development Worker Julie. These steps have strengthened The Hygge Hub’s foundations and enabled Michelle to grow a community-focused wellness service that continues to make a meaningful difference.

Case study: Prime Active Communities (PAC)

Prime Active Communities CIC (PAC) is a Hattersley-based social enterprise focused on youth and community engagement. Operating across Hattersley, St Peter’s, and Hurst wards in Ashton, PAC delivers a wide range of youth services including detached youth work, the Jam Pot Music project, creative youth groups, podcasting, and general youth engagement. They also contribute to the local Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) initiative, ASPIRE.

To sustain and grow their services, PAC sought to diversify their funding beyond local authority support. Action Together’s Community Development Worker, Dawn, provided tailored support throughout 2024. This included identifying suitable funders such as Children in Need and the

Postcode Lottery, helping PAC estimate full project costs, reviewing and advising on grant applications, and offering additional guidance during the second stage of the Children in Need application process.

PAC Director Mark Turton also joined Action Together's eight-week Social Economy Accelerator and received one-to-one business mentoring from Mantle. This support helped PAC strengthen its income generation strategy and expand its commissioned services and workforce development offer.

As a result, PAC successfully secured £115,000 in funding. Mark shared, "We were considering paid training for bid writing, but Dawn's one-to-one guidance has been far more effective. Our staff member is now confident and skilled in writing funding applications."

PAC's story highlights how practical, hands-on support can empower grassroots organisations to build their capacity, diversify and secure funding, and grow sustainably to meet the needs of their communities.

6. Partnerships and Collaboration

We hosted 127 separate network meetings and forums, with 1,824 attendees.

We strengthen partnerships, help make connections, and influence change. We connect voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups to each other, and we work with a variety of partner agencies to promote joint working 'on the ground' and at a decision-making level to ensure that the VCFSE sector has the opportunity to understand and respond to local and national priorities.

Themes that run through our work:

- **Deepening Collaboration**: Stronger partnerships between VCFSE organisations, public sector bodies, and communities.
- **Amplifying Lived Experience**: Inclusion of people with lived experience in decision-making, co-production, and leadership roles.
- **Systems Change**: Focus on addressing root causes of poverty, inequality, and violence through long-term, community-led approaches.
- **Health and Wellbeing**: Targeted initiatives to reduce health inequalities and improve access to services.
- **Youth and Community Safety**: Community-led violence reduction programmes and youth engagement initiatives.

Oldham: Building Stronger Communities Through Strategic Collaboration

Oldham has seen a year of innovation, inclusion, and investment. The £2.4m Local Motion funding has enabled a systems change approach to tackling poverty and inequality, while our work in health, youth safety, and community engagement continues to amplify the voices of those most affected by local challenges.

Across the borough, our work has focused on deepening collaboration across the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector and public services. From the launch of the VCFSE–Public Sector Forum to the impactful work of the Community Health Champions and Women's Network, and through a wide range of forums and networks, we've created spaces for shared learning, strategic influence, and grassroots action.

Key Achievements

- **Extensive Network Facilitation**: Over a dozen forums and networks supported, including the Community Explorers, Women's Network, and Community Health Champions.
- **Strategic Representation**: VCFSE sector represented on 20+ governance boards, influencing local decision-making.
- **VCFSE–Public Sector Forum**: Launched to align strategies and embed co-production and fair funding principles.
- **Oldham Local Motion**: Secured £2.4M investment; launched collaborative governance with OPAN (now Oldham Positive Action Network).
- **Community Health Champions**: Tackled key health issues (MMR, cancer screening) through grassroots engagement.
- **Women's Network**: Delivered domestic abuse projects, business engagement, and menopause awareness; secured funding through March 2025.
- **Violence Reduction Unit**: Delivered youth-focused mentoring, sports, and empowerment programmes in Glodwick.
- **Move More – Feel Better**: Advanced physical activity and wellbeing through Sports England funding and local alliances.
- **Engagement and Insight Network**: Developed an Engagement Toolkit and promoted inclusive engagement practices.

Rochdale: Driving Systems Change Through Community Power

Rochdale has been a beacon of community-led systems change this year. Our networks and foundation groups have not only influenced local policy and funding but have also redefined how power is shared. From the Anti-Poverty Foundation Group's strategic wins to the launch of

the “With You” campaign tackling violence against women and girls, Rochdale’s communities are leading the way. Participatory grant-making, recovery community development, and youth violence reduction initiatives have all been shaped by lived experience. This year has seen a shift from service delivery to co-production, with communities at the heart of decision-making and innovation.

Key Achievements

- **Systems Change Leadership**: Anti-Poverty and Women’s Foundation Groups led co-designed funding, campaigns, and strategic influence.
- **Participatory Grant-Making**: Refugee Forum and Recovery Communities led funding decisions, ensuring alignment with community needs.
- **Women’s Network With You Campaign**: Borough-wide initiative to end violence against women and girls through storytelling and allyship.
- **Freehold Community Development**: Shifted from deficit-based to asset-based approaches, building trust and local leadership.
- **Youth Violence Reduction**: ASPYA and Darnhill alliances delivered targeted youth programmes, supported by Violence Reduction Unit funding.
- **Recovery Communities**: Established a visible, stigma-reducing recovery network with participatory funding and peer-led initiatives.
- **South Asian Health Engagement**: Appointed a dedicated lead to strengthen voice and influence of South Asian-led organisations.

Tameside: Connecting Voices, Strengthening Impact

In Tameside, our focus has been on amplifying community voices and strengthening the infrastructure that supports them. Through thematic networks, summits, and targeted engagement, we’ve brought together diverse groups to tackle shared challenges. Highlights include the expansion of the Use Your Energy programme, the Tameside Voluntary Sector Summit, and the impactful work of the Ashton St Peters Youth Alliance. Our Healthwatch reports and engagement with racially minoritised communities have informed strategic decisions, while the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Network continues to foster collaboration and practical solutions. Tameside’s story this year is one of connection, inclusion, and collective action.

Key Achievements

- **Use Your Energy Programme**: Launched second phase of community investment to promote physical activity, and published report on UYE’s impact over the last five years
- **Voluntary Sector Summit**: Reconnected 30+ groups, fostering collaboration and shared priorities.

- **Healthwatch Reports**: Published key insights on cost of living and access to healthcare for people who experience racial inequalities.
- **Partnership Engagement Network**: Conducted focus groups to understand barriers for communities experiencing racial inequalities.
- **ASPYA Youth Alliance**: Delivered diverse youth programmes addressing domestic abuse, violence, and wellbeing through our work with the Violence Reduction Unit.
- **Refugee and Asylum Seeker Network**: Facilitated multi-agency collaboration and scenario-based problem solving.
- **Social Economy Network:** Provides training and networking opportunities for organisations working in the Social Economy as part of the Our Business programme.

7. Leadership and Advocacy

Live Well: Championing Community-Led Health and Wellbeing Across Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside

Live Well is Greater Manchester's commitment to building healthier, happier, and fairer communities by empowering people and organisations to lead on health and wellbeing.

This year, Action Together has played a pivotal role in advancing the Live Well movement across Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside.

Action Together's leadership team has been at the forefront of regional efforts to embed the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector into Greater Manchester's health and economic strategies.

Our CEO, Liz, served as a VCFSE Advisor to the GM Combined Authority, ensuring our sector had a seat at the table in shaping the integrated settlement and mayoral priorities. Liz has also taken a leading role in developing a new GM Strategic National Lottery bid for Live Well, that will strengthen and invest in community-led spaces.

Teams from across our localities have contributed to Live Well events in Greater Manchester, with details on March's GM Live Well conference here: https://www.vcfseleadershipgm.org.uk/news-and-events/gm-live-well-conference-growing-great-everyday-support-in-every-neighbourhood-19th-march-2025

This work has included co-design sessions with VCFSE leaders and local authority partners, with a strong focus on inclusion and equity. This focus has led us to develop tailored engagement programmes for Live Well in each of our three localities.

Oldham: Deepening Community Engagement and Co-Production

We led the Live Well Accelerator programme in East Oldham, working closely with Oldham Council and the Innovation Unit. Our work began with extensive community engagement, including participation in our Community Explorers meetings and local council forums. We

heard from residents through surveys and informal conversations at community events, gathering valuable insights into what helps them live healthier and happier lives.

These insights culminated in a 'Design Jam' co-production event, where residents, community leaders, and public sector partners came together to co-design solutions. This collaborative approach not only strengthened local relationships but also laid the groundwork for sustainable, community-led health initiatives. Watch this video for highlights of and findings from the event: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnNdZxo-qAA

Funding from the GM Live Well Fund has been instrumental in supporting this work, ensuring that the voices of East Oldham residents continue to shape the future of health and wellbeing in their area, and giving us a foundation to develop this work with engaged local participants.

Rochdale: Amplifying the Voice of the VCFSE Sector

In Rochdale, our focus has been on advocacy and strategic influence.

Throughout the year, we contributed to multiple GM Live Well events, sharing the experiences and aspirations of our Anti-Poverty Foundation Group and advocating for greater community power and accountability.

We also facilitated coordination sessions to keep VCFSE leaders informed and engaged, and supported the development of resource plans for the Economic Trailblazer initiative. These efforts have helped position the VCFSE sector as an equal and essential partner in regional planning and delivery.

Tameside: Harnessing the Power of Stories for Prevention

In Tameside, our work has centred on prevention and the power of storytelling. As one of the Live Well Accelerator sites, we brought together local VCFSE community groups and system partners – from adult social care to housing and public health – to explore what prevention looks like in practice. We identified a pilot site and began building a borough-wide approach to community-led health.

A highlight of the year was our storytelling workshop, where leaders from local VCFSE organisations shared powerful accounts of how their work is transforming lives. These stories, captured on video, have been shared widely with system partners and have begun to influence how prevention is understood and valued across the borough.

- Hear from The Anthony Seddon Fund: https://youtu.be/m1NgZ60iV1I
- Hear from West African Development: https://youtu.be/iP4IBsqc4_w
- Hear from Prime Active Communities: https://youtu.be/1d7CDnDbJXk
- Hear from New Life Church: https://youtu.be/0kzH5o3FHSw

We also established a Live Well Leadership Group in Tameside, which co-designed with 130 VCFSE groups and system partners a set of Community-Led Wellbeing Principles. These principles reflect the values and behaviours that underpin effective community-led prevention and will be shared more broadly at our upcoming Voluntary Sector Summit.

Next Steps

Through the next year, we will build on this work by hosting engagement events across our localities, bringing more people into the Live Well programme and helping our members and the people they support inform the priorities and actions of Live Well.

Stronger Together

Thank you to all our members and partners who came and made our 2024 Stronger Together event and Annual General Meeting at Shree Bharatiya Mandal, Indian Association Tameside such a success.

We heard from inspirational keynote speaker Ruth Ibegbuna, developed the skills of our member organisations through workshops on Defeating Narratives of Division and Community Power Mapping, and hosted a Funding Fair with local and national funders.

Attendees appreciated the opportunity to "bring everyone together all in one space", work to "a common cause and goal", "meet Funders face-to-face", and "the support from Action Together bringing me into a space I've not been in before." You can find out more about the event and watch a video recap of the day here on our website.

We also welcomed five new trustees to the Action Together Board at our AGM. This followed our Trustee recruitment drive over the summer, and we're delighted at the range of skills and experiences Martin Ashton, Dewan Choudhury, Aqub Nazir, Mina Patel and Mark Widdup will bring to Action Together. Find out more about our new and existing Trustees on our website. We also said goodbye to two of our long-serving Trustees, our former Vice Chair Adrian Ball and former Treasurer Anne Parkes. Thank you to them both for all they have contributed to Action Together and the communities we support.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Our focus on EDI and sharing the stories and success of our member organisations continued this year.

Highlights of our activity included:

- **International Transgender Day of Visibility** – Advice on developing a trans-inclusive workplace https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/developing-trans-inclusive-workplace
- **Mental Health Awareness Week** – Sharing stories of groups supported by our funding to make a positive impact on people's wellbeing and specific funding opportunities
- **Men's Health Week** – Heard from Live Great Adventures about their Men's Minds Matter project: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/mens-health-week-and-live-great-adventures
- **Refugee Week** – Shared events, activity and support: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/refugee-week-2024
- **South Asian Heritage Month** - Shared events, activity and support and heard from:
    - Kashmir Youth Project (KYP): https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/south-asian-heritage-month-and-kyp

    - Yuvanis Foundation: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/south-asian-heritage-month-and-yuvanis-foundation
- **National Inclusion Week** – How we're creating an inclusive workplace at Action Together, and some suggestions for where to start at your organisation: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/national-inclusion-week-2024
- **Black History Month** – Spoke to our members:
    - BHA: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/black-history-month-2024-reclaiming-narratives-0
    - Real Vision Community Group: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/black-history-month-2024-real-vision-community-group
    - United Sisters: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/black-history-month-2024-united-sisters
    - Safe Square Sanctuary (SASSA): https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/black-history-month-2024-safe-square-sanctuary-sassa
- **World Mental Health Day** – What organisations can do to support staff and volunteer mental health: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/world-mental-health-day-2024
- **UK Disability History Month** – Shared the actions we've taken internally and how organisations can work towards inclusivity: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/uk-disability-history-month-2024
- **International Men's Day** - Compiled a snapshot of some of the support from across our communities, and some of the specific events being held: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/international-mens-day-2024
- **Hate Crime Awareness Week** – Shared projects and events we've supported to combat hate crime: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/hate-crime-awareness-week-2025
- **International Women's Day** – Shared information on our Women's Network and promoted local support organisations and events across our communities: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/international-womens-day-2025

In August, we saw racism and violence in our localities directed at Muslims and people seeking asylum. Action Together quickly responded to ensure effective messaging with the VCFSE sector, helped manage community tensions and supported local organisations to make judgements to stay open or close. We prepared resources and a statement in response on our website: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-statement-racist-and-islamophobic-violence

We received positive feedback from a number of member organisations for our swift response and solidarity in calling out racism, being explicit about the causes and providing leadership to do better. Locally, we were quickly called upon and asked to support the significant communication efforts, including a peer exchange of VCFSE leaders and organising a community leaders session between the police and 77 community leaders in Oldham. At GM level, we met daily with the respond cell and other Local Infrastructure Organisations. We will continue to stand in solidarity with our member organisations against hatred and racism, and to represent and advocate for local voluntary, community and faith organisations to have the resources and support they need.

We were delighted to once again be able to host our annual Staff Iftar event in March, which serves as an opportunity for our teams to come together and learn about Ramadan: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/action-together-staff-iftar-2025

We look forward to observing more celebrations next year, including Christmas, Ramadan and other opportunities to bring our staff and communities together to share and learn.

8. Investment

We directed £1,850,674 in funding to 634 Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations.

This was a 15% rise in the number of groups funded, as we reached even more local organisations in need of funding for their activities.

The funding we direct into the sector is tailored to the needs of each of the boroughs we support, though there are key themes that run through the funds we provide:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Cost of Living and Poverty Relief
- Volunteer Support and Recognition
- Arts, Culture, and Creativity
- Youth and Family Support
- Equity and Inclusion

The difference our funding made:

- **Hundreds of community-led projects** funded, addressing urgent needs such as poverty, health inequality, food insecurity, and social isolation.
- **Empowered grassroots organisations** to innovate, collaborate, and deliver culturally relevant, inclusive services.
- **Strengthened community resilience** through targeted investment, capacity building, and celebration of volunteering.

Highlights in Oldham

- **One Oldham Fund**: Secured a £500,000 investment for community-led health and wellbeing initiatives. Delivered microgrants, Warm Hub support, and anti-hate crime funding.

- **Household Support Fund**: £340,000 secured for HSF7, with £220,000 delivered in HSF6 to support households facing cost-of-living pressures. Thousands of households received direct support with food, heating, and essentials. Watch this video for an example of how All Nations Church used their HSF funding and how Action Together supported and continues to drive referrals to them: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H02iWj7x_Ng&t
- **Community Health Champions**: £180,000 invested to address health inequalities and promote vaccination uptake.
- **Family Hubs**: £100,000 invested to expand outreach and access to family services.
- **Volunteer Celebration Fund**: £20,000 awarded to recognise and retain volunteers.
- **Oldham Community Lottery**: Raised over £28,000 for 66 local causes. Hear about the Community Lottery from some of the organisations who've taken part: https://youtu.be/W51dPVdRwRU

Case Study – Heyside Parish Hall

Heyside Parish Hall, based in Royton, is a vital community hub used daily by both church and community groups. Matt Robinson, the Hall's Secretary and an Action Together member, had reached out to us for funding advice to modernise the building – specifically to refurbish the toilets, rewire the property, and install solar panels.

Matt had built a strong working relationship with Uzma, Action Together's Oldham Community Development Worker, after offering the hall as a venue for a Community Explorers meeting. Uzma provided tailored support, including guidance on suitable funders, one-to-one advice, and feedback on applications. Matt also benefited from Action Together's fortnightly Funding e-Bulletin and group discussions about major funders like The National Lottery Awards for All.

With Uzma's support, Matt submitted several successful funding bids. In 2024/2025, Heyside Parish Hall secured an impressive £98,000 in total:

- £20,000 from The National Lottery Awards for All for a full toilet refurbishment
- £38,000 from the UK Government/Groundwork VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme for energy upgrades, including solar panels
- £30,000 from the SUEZ Communities Fund for rewiring the building

These upgrades have significantly improved the hall's facilities, ensuring it remains a welcoming and functional space for the local community.

Matt shared, "Thanks again for the support of Action Together, especially Uzma for her guidance with these grant applications. The funding has enabled us to complete some long overdue upgrades to the building, ensuring it can continue providing a vital community space in Heyside."

This story highlights the power of collaboration, tailored support, and persistence in helping community organisations secure funding and thrive.

Highlights in Rochdale

- **Rochdale Communities Fund**: Over **£900,000** distributed through 224 grants across four quarters, supporting diverse needs from food security to arts and recovery.
- **Micro Grants**: Funded 43 grassroots projects, including support for chronic illness, literacy, and youth wellbeing.
- **Rochdale Creates Fund**: £89,660 awarded to 22 groups to use arts for wellbeing and community cohesion.
- **Recovery Communities Grants**: £195,950 invested in lived experience-led addiction recovery projects.
- **Climate Co-operators Fund**: £19,633 awarded to raise climate awareness and create green spaces.
- **Wider Essentials & Food Solutions**: Over £200,000 invested in essentials and sustainable food support.
- **Volunteer Celebration Fund**: £8,197 awarded to 19 groups to celebrate and retain volunteers.

Case Study – The Young Khadims

The Young Khadims, based in Rochdale North, received support from Action Together's Development team and were awarded £1,098 in August to host their Annual Awards Evening. This event plays a vital role in motivating young people by recognising their hard work throughout the year, timed just before the new academic year to inspire a positive start.

The awards evening was a great success, featuring guest speakers and local community influencers. A returning attendee shared, "It's a great initiative to celebrate the volunteers before the school year starts again. Jamal and the team are doing a great job – it gets better every year."

The event not only celebrated achievements but also strengthened community spirit and youth engagement. The Young Khadims expressed their gratitude to Action Together for their support, which helped make the event possible and impactful for the young people involved.

Highlights in Tameside

- **Volunteer Celebration Fund**: £20,000 awarded to 48 groups to honour volunteer contributions.

- **Best Start for Life Fund**: Over £70,000 invested to support perinatal mental health and early childhood wellbeing.
- **Use Your Energy (Sport England)**: £73,566 distributed to engage children and young people in physical activity.
- **Creative Action Grant**: £4,985 used to support arts-based wellbeing projects for carers and community members.
- **Covid and Winter Vaccination Grants**: £25,000 distributed to support targeted outreach to underrepresented communities to boost vaccine uptake.
- **Robin Estill Fund Launch**: Promoted arts for mental health and neurodivergent communities through a collaborative networking event.

Case study – Celebrating Volunteers at Global Grooves

In June, Global Grooves, an organisation based at The Vale in Mossley, received £500 from the Volunteer Celebration Fund, a grant designed to help groups recognise, recruit, and retain volunteers by celebrating their contributions. The funding enabled Global Grooves to thank their dedicated volunteers, particularly Jayne, who has played a key role in The Vale's community garden.

Jayne, who joined through the gardening volunteer programme, brought valuable permaculture skills and quickly became a leader within the group. She took ownership of the garden space, helping it flourish while also growing in confidence and developing strong leadership abilities. Her idea to organise a visit to the RHS gardens was made possible thanks to the grant, offering a meaningful and inspiring experience for the team.

Jayne also attended a Volunteer Celebration Film event, where she connected with volunteers from other local organisations like The Vale and Emmaus. Reflecting on the evening, she said, "It was nice to see the craft people and meet the Emmaus people… we discussed the film as we walked home. Thanks for a lovely evening."

This story highlights how small grants can have a big impact – recognising volunteers, strengthening community bonds, and empowering individuals like Jayne to grow personally and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

9. Our strategic objectives

We launched our new five-year strategy in December 2022, to take us from 2023 to 2028.

The strategy will cover all of our core work in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, with these shared strategic priorities:

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities
2. Advance our approach to social change

3. Grow and transform as a local funder

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities

We will do this by:

- Working in neighbourhoods to build deep relationships with groups and strengthen what they do
- Addressing barriers and making Action Together's offer accessible to all parts of our communities of place, identity and experience
- Strengthening community ownership and control of local land, buildings and assets
- Developing and championing volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital

Some of the ways we have done this in 2024/25

- Continued to embed Community Team model across neighbourhoods
- Relaunched website with improved navigation and accessibility features
- Increased the number of people receiving information about volunteering and registering to volunteer (+38% on previous year)
- Created online Member Area with free resources and support
- Continued to deliver Organisation Health Checks to support local groups and identify their strengths and areas for improvement

2. Advance our approach to social change

We will do this by:

- Developing our social change networks so they are owned by members with shared learning, power and decision-making
- Investing in networks to identify opportunities for social change, take shared action and make a demonstrable impact in communities
- Developing our skills so that every team across Action Together understands their role in enabling social change
- Strengthening community leadership and the role of community anchors in shaping neighbourhoods

Some of the ways we have done this in 2024/25

- Stronger Together and AGM event themed around our strategic objective to Advance our approach to social change
- Connected and directed funding to networks

- Linked networks with local and national campaigns and awareness dates
- Championed EDI across our organisation and involved all our staff team
- Led on Live Well programme across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside (see Leadership & Advocacy section)

3. Grow and transform as a local funder

We will do this by:

- Establishing a strategic investment fund in each borough for public and private partners
- Committing to being an open and trusting grantmaker, making longer-term, strategic investments into the core of what our members do
- Connecting and enhancing our development support so we invest time and skills as well as money
- Supporting our members to have a stronger collective voice influencing local funding priorities and bringing investment into their communities

Some of the ways we have done this in 2024/25

- Continued to develop One Oldham Fund and Rochdale Communities Fund, and developed Tameside Communities Fund for launch early next year
- Introduced new strands to these funds in response to local priorities (see Investment section)
- Openly shared information on our website from groups who've received funding, amount they were awarded, and what the funded projects were
- Developed and deepened our support for organisations working in the social economy and diversifying their methods of income generation
- Hosted Funding Fair and Meet The Funders so applicants could meet and speak to national funders
- Developed capacity building support offer around intense organisational development support to include business planning, income generation and sustainability

Find our full strategy at this link: Action Together Strategy 2023 - 28

10. Our projects

Social Prescribing: Connecting People to What Matters

Social Prescribing offers free, personalised support for individuals facing physical, mental, or social health challenges. Delivered in Oldham through a strong partnership network—including GPs, community services, and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership—this service helps people improve wellbeing by connecting them to local activities, groups, and support services.

Watch this video with one of our Link Workers to find out more about Social Prescribing and the impact it makes: https://youtu.be/HMxJS9W6vaI

Key Achievements

- **2,796 referrals** received in Oldham
- **84%** reported improved overall wellbeing
- **98%** would recommend the service
- **435** people supported through integrated work with Adult Social Care
- **200+ individuals** supported to stay in work via the **WorkWell** project
- **Six Chatty Café venues** established, plus telephone befriending for isolated individuals
- **New peer support volunteers** recruited and trained

Thematic Highlights

- **Mental Health & Wellbeing**: Regular MDT meetings, suicide prevention engagement, and trauma-informed practice training
- **Employment & Inclusion**: Joint delivery of the GM WorkWell project with Get Oldham Working
- **Community Health**: Collaboration with Oldham Family Practice to support cardio renal metabolic conditions
- **Social Connection**: Expansion of Chatty Café and befriending services to reduce loneliness
- **Training & Development**: Staff accessed training in mental health, safeguarding, poverty awareness, and more
- **Community Engagement**
  The team actively participated in local events, including SEND transition days, volunteer fairs, and community health days—ensuring visibility and accessibility of services.

Social Prescribing Stories: Real Lives, Real Change

Katie's Journey: Rebuilding Confidence After Cancer

Katie, a 34-year-old mother of two, was referred to Social Prescribing after undergoing surgery for cervical cancer. Once a full-time caregiver, Katie found herself isolated and lacking the confidence to leave her home following her diagnosis and treatment. Her goal was to regain independence and eventually return to work.

Through regular phone conversations, her Link Worker built a trusting relationship and discovered Katie's passion for arts and crafts. She was connected to the TOG Mind Peer Support project and Talking Therapies, providing both social and emotional support. With encouragement, Katie began attending school pick-ups alone—something she hadn't done in a long time. She now looks forward to spending quality time with her family and is exploring volunteering opportunities as a step toward re-entering the workforce.

Mary's Story: From Homelessness to Home

At 89, Mary returned to Oldham from Ireland after an unsuccessful attempt to retire abroad. She found herself homeless, staying temporarily with a friend and separated from her beloved greyhound, Lucy. Lacking digital skills and access, Mary struggled to navigate the housing system.

Social Prescribing fast-tracked her case, coordinated with housing services, and secured donations from Age UK. Mary was provided with essential furniture, food, and emotional support. Her Link Worker ensured a smooth transition into her new canal-side flat in Failsworth, where she was happily reunited with Lucy. Mary now feels safe, settled, and supported, and is exploring local churches to reconnect with her faith and community.

Fahana's Transformation: From Isolation to Independence

Fahana faced severe anxiety and depression due to overcrowded living conditions and a lack of personal space. With limited English and no knowledge of housing systems, she felt trapped and isolated. Her Social Prescriber provided consistent, culturally sensitive support over 11 months—helping her apply for housing, manage documentation, and understand tenancy responsibilities.

Fahana secured a one-bedroom flat in her preferred area, marking a turning point in her life. She now manages her home confidently, has reconnected with family, and participates in community life. Her mental health has significantly improved, and she feels empowered and optimistic about her future.

Frank's Progress: Finding Purpose and Wellbeing

Frank, living alone and struggling with isolation and low mood, was referred for support with housing and motivation. His Link Worker met him at a convenient community venue and helped him develop a personalised wellbeing plan. Frank was connected to volunteering opportunities and enrolled in the Exercise on Referral Programme through Oldham Community Leisure.

He also received help with a housing application to escape anti-social behaviour in his neighbourhood. Frank now regularly attends the gym, has applied for volunteer roles, and feels more purposeful and connected. As he puts it: “I love going to the gym—it’s brilliant. I’ve already been seven times and it’s getting me out of the house. Thank you.”

Social Prescribing continues to be a vital, person-centred service that empowers individuals, strengthens community ties, and addresses the wider determinants of health. Through collaboration, compassion, and innovation, we are helping people live healthier, more connected lives.

Note: We were the Social Prescribing provider in Tameside until 31 March 2024, and so delivered no Social Prescribing services in Tameside in the year covered by this report.

Miles of Smiles

Miles of Smiles is a community transport scheme where volunteer drivers take people to and from health appointments and activities in Tameside. Action Together administers the scheme and recruits volunteer drivers.

In total this year, Miles of Smiles completed 3,879 journeys, across a total of 34,582 miles.

Highlights this year include the recruitment of eight new volunteer drivers including at Action Together’s volunteer engagement events, first aid training to ensure drivers have the skills and confidence to respond in an emergency, a new WhatsApp group to communicate with drivers, and the support of fifteen Miles of Smiles drivers to collect toys for the Tameside Toy Appeal.

“We want to thank you and all the volunteers who assisted Dad with his various appointments. Dad was always very pleased with the service, and felt respected and cared for. Thank you everyone.”

- Daughter of a Miles of Smiles Passenger

“If I didn’t have transport, I would need two buses to get to my group and some days I’m not fit for it. It would cost me £22 for the return trip in a taxi.”

- Linda, who uses Miles of Smiles to attend a social group for blind people

"My sisters and I will be eternally grateful to the team who make this happen. The service definitely comes under the heading of Things That Money Can’t Buy!”

- Daughter of a Miles of Smiles Passenger

Healthwatch Oldham

Healthwatch Oldham’s Annual Report reflects the voices of people across Oldham who have shared their experiences of health and social care services. By listening to what matters most

to the community, they've been able to inform service providers, influence decision-makers, and help shape improvements in care.

Throughout the year, they have worked to ensure that local people are heard, especially those whose voices are often underrepresented.

"Listening to the views of local people regarding their experiences of local health and care services is critical to the work of Healthwatch Oldham and throughout 2024/25 we worked with different Oldham communities to achieve this.

"We worked closely with key partners to run health events for local people (including an Active Healthy Families Event at Oldham Library where we had over a thousand visitors) and were able to provide information, advice and health checks, signpost people to further support and receive information and insight about local services at each of these events.

"We were also able to publish a report regarding your views on secondary/metastatic cancer services, work with local GP Practices to help develop Patient Participation Groups, publish your stories regarding care experiences and conduct an Enter and View visit to Maternity Services at The Royal Oldham Hospital. Reports from all this work are still available to view on our website, and this annual report provides more information on our key work activities."

- Jacqueline Wood, Healthwatch Oldham Chair

Read Healthwatch Oldham's annual report.

Healthwatch Tameside

Healthwatch Tameside's annual report outlines how they supported over 3,400 people via their information and signposting offer, gathered insights from 648 residents, and published four major reports shaping local services. It highlights how lived experiences have directly influenced decision-making, improved service access, and driven targeted action on inequality, cost of living, and care standards.

Highlights from the year include:

- **Cost of Living Report**: Directly informed Tameside Council's anti-poverty strategy, including the targeting of the Helping Hands campaign and new support schemes tackling economic inactivity and poor health outcomes.
- **Access to GP Services**: Feedback from residents led to actionable recommendations now embedded in Tameside's Primary Care Improvement Programme.
- **Ethnic Minority Healthcare Experiences**: Findings guided the work of the Tameside Inequalities Reference Group and helped steer new cultural competence initiatives in primary care.
- **CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)**: A major collaborative report, based on input from nearly 1,200 people (with strong Tameside representation), influenced regional policy discussions at the Greater Manchester ICS level.
- **Enter and View Visits**: Insights from care home visits led to implemented changes in resident safety, staff visibility, and complaints procedures.

- **Six-year contract:** Secured a new six-year contract with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC), providing funding stability to continue driving meaningful change for residents. As part of broader service improvements, the NHS Complaints Advocacy function was transferred to VoiceAbility in April 2024.

"We are pleased to share our annual report, which demonstrates the impact of Healthwatch Tameside and how we have used people's insights to improve local services.

"Every conversation, survey, and story shared with us truly helps shape services for the better. This year, we've not only listened, but we've also ensured those voices led to real decisions, visible changes, and better outcomes for the people of Tameside.

"This report reflects a collective effort made possible by our dedicated team, partners, and communities."

- Alex Leach, Healthwatch Tameside Manager

Read Healthwatch Tameside's annual report.

Culture Coop

Since 2022, Action Together has been working with local partners in Rochdale to develop the Culture Coop, supported by funding from the Arts Council's Creative People and Places Programme. Action Together's CEO chairs the consortium, which aims to create innovative, place-based solutions for cultural access – empowering communities to define what counts as art and culture, where it happens, who creates it, and who experiences it.

Our long-term vision is to build sustainable, community-led arts programmes that reflect and serve communities on their own terms. Initially, our goal has been to establish the Culture Coop as an effective mechanism for sharing power and decision-making around cultural development and investment across all communities in Rochdale.

11. Our future plans

Our strategy remains the guiding light for all our work. Looking ahead, we are committed to supporting more local people and community organisations to take a leading role in shaping the services and spaces that matter most to them. We will continue to prioritise community ownership, shared decision-making – especially around resource allocation – and building strong partnerships to tackle the most pressing local challenges.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Grow investment across all areas of the local VCFSE sector, while advocating for greater stability and recognition of the sector's essential contributions.

- Strengthen our capacity in community organising, and support others doing this work—particularly where it helps shift power and wealth into the hands of local people.
- Influence local and Greater Manchester policies, focusing on those that reflect the priorities our members tell us matter most to the communities they support.
- Create brave spaces for people to come together to challenge injustice, and secure new partners and investment to sustain this work.

12. Strengthening the VCFSE Sector in Greater Manchester

10GM is a strategic collaboration of local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) – Action Together, Bolton CVS, Macc, and Salford CVS – working together to support and amplify the voice and impact of the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector across Greater Manchester (GM). With a central team and deep local roots, 10GM connects borough-level initiatives to GM-wide strategies, ensuring the VCFSE sector is a key partner in shaping regional policy and delivery.

Action Together plays a pivotal leadership role. Our CEO is one of 10GM's Directors and actively represents the VCFSE sector in high-level GM governance and reform groups.

Through 10GM, this year Action Together has:

- Strengthened the **strategic voice** of the VCFSE sector in GM governance.
- Enabled **cross-borough collaboration** and knowledge sharing.
- Championed **inclusive, community-led approaches** to health, wellbeing, and economic development.
- Positioned the VCFSE sector as a **key delivery partner** in GM's reform and devolution agenda.

Highlights and Achievements

Strategic Influence and Representation

- Led the VCFSE Leadership Group in producing a sector manifesto and hosting a GM Mayoral Hustings.
- Action Together's CEO contributed to the GM Executive Reform and Core Group, advocating for VCFSE inclusion in the integrated settlement with government.
- Joined the NHS GM Commissioning Steering Group and contributed to the Greater Manchester Strategy Editorial Board.

Collaborative Projects and Partnerships

- Launched 'Our Business', a joint initiative with Co-ops UK to grow the social economy in GM.
- Signed a refreshed GM Moving Memorandum of Understanding, reinforcing commitment to health and wellbeing through physical activity.
- Contributed to GM Live Well events, focusing on community wealth, everyday support, and inclusive health systems.

Sector Development and Inclusion

- Relaunched the VCFSE GM Population Health Group, ensuring sector representation in public health planning.
- Facilitated weekly updates and coordination sessions for VCFSE leaders on Live Well and GMCA/NHS developments.
- Supported the Economic Trailblazer initiative, ensuring VCFSE involvement in local economic and skills planning.

Innovation and Funding

- Led the development of a GM Strategic Lottery bid for Live Well, with co-design sessions involving over 30 VCFSE leaders and local authority partners.
- Prioritised engagement with marginalised and excluded communities to ensure inclusive funding and programme design.

GM VCSE Leadership Group

We are part of the GM VCSE Leadership Group, and supported the launch of the group's manifesto for 2024 – 2028. Read here: https://www.vcseleadershipgm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/GM_Manifesto-D.pdf

This manifesto summarises the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector's ambitions and key asks of our public sector partners over the next four years:

1. Continue to embed VCSE sector as an equal partner
2. Listening City Region
3. Embed VCSE in public service delivery
4. Build caring, resilient communities
5. A 'Community Wealth' City Region
6. Champion and value our workforce

Find out more about the GM VCSE Leadership Group: https://www.vcseleadershipgm.org.uk/

13. Our purpose and values

Our purpose and charitable objects

'To strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, maximising opportunities to create positive social change, promote social justice and harness social benefit.'

Our charitable objects are to:

- promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government areas of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and the surrounding area and, in particular, to build the capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.
- promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Our mission is to strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, increase individual social action, and work across organisational and sector boundaries to maximise every opportunity to harness social good and create social change. There are an estimated 3,788 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside according to our State of the Sector research.

Public Benefit - how we decide who to help

We make decisions in line with the Public Benefit guidance (2014) and ensure:

- Decisions are taken in line with our charitable objects
- That we adhere to our values in the decision we take
- We prioritise our services to help those that would be unable to pay for the support and / or who are tackling a significant social injustice
- We identify and minimise risks
- There is no personal benefit (or advantage) given to trustees or staff

Our values

Action Together's values underpin all our activities including our strategy, operational plan, workforce development and recruitment. We want to be held to account on our values, as ways of working that we will always strive for.

Believe it's possible - vision and ideas matter. We have confidence in the power of people and communities and strive to release their potential to create the widest possible benefits whilst promoting social justice.

Strengthen others - we work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We achieve this by working collaboratively, sharing skills, and developing relationships between people, groups and agencies.

Be true - we are brave enough to share constructive insight to make progress. Our unique insight comes from our connections with, and amplification of, the diverse range of voices of people and groups that we work with.

14. Structure, Governance and Management

Governance

The charity is set up as a charitable incorporated organisation and was registered with the Charity Commission on 10 February 2016. Action Together CIO is governed by its constitution. The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Action Together and is ultimately responsible for everything the incorporated charity does. Action Together's board can have a maximum of 14 Board members, 12 of which are elected from its membership, with the ability to co-opt a further two people.

Action Together's Honorary Officers for 2024/25 were:

- **Chair** - Camilla Guereca
- **Vice Chair** - Andy Wiggans
- **Treasurer** - Mina Patel

We undertook an extensive trustee recruitment campaign ahead of our Annual General Meeting, aiming to recruit four trustees to fill roles of those who had stepped down or come to the end of their tenure. We targeted specific skills from new trustees and were delighted with the campaign and its response, as we welcomed five Board members with fantastic skills and experience: Martin Ashton, Dewan Choudhury, Aqub Nazir, Mina Patel and Mark Widdup.

Board members are supported in their role by receiving an induction and support from the CEO and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to take up our training and development opportunities, as well as external training that is of interest.

A full list of the trustees can be found at https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-board

Action Together has two standing committees that steer the work of Healthwatch Oldham and Healthwatch Tameside. These have their own terms of reference but ultimate accountability of the contracts and employment is with Action Together.

Structure and management

The day to day running of the charity is handled through a scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive, Liz Windsor-Welsh. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Leadership Team, which consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Operations, and the three Directors responsible for the management of our locality teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Our Website

- **Major Redesign and Relaunch:** Action Together undertook a comprehensive redesign of its website, shaped by consultations with staff and member organisations across all three localities. The new site is structured around user needs, with improved navigation, enhanced accessibility features, and expanded self-service options.
- **New Features and Functionality:** A Member Login area was introduced, offering access to a growing library of free resources. Event booking was streamlined, and a new Events and Training Calendar was launched to boost engagement.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** The site now includes extensive accessibility tools, ensuring a more inclusive experience for all users.
- **Increased Engagement:** Website traffic rose to 884,860 hits, a 13% increase (an additional 101,622 visits) compared to the previous year. This continues a trend of year-on-year growth since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Popular Pages:**
    - **Volunteering** – once again our most visited page.
    - **Find Funding** – second most popular, a key destination for organisations seeking support.
    - **Community Activities Directory** – widely used by the public and partners.
    - **Events and Training Calendar** – saw increased engagement following its launch.
    - **Member Login** – visits nearly doubled, particularly from returning users, highlighting the success of the new member-focused features.

System Development

- **CiviCRM Enhancements**: A new grants module was developed and integrated with financial systems, with rollout due in the next year. The system was upgraded to Drupal 10, enabling future scalability.
- **Data and Security**: Annual data protection training was completed; minor data incidents were managed without escalation. Cyber Essentials accreditation was renewed, and NHS safeguarding standards were met.
- **Digital Infrastructure**: Transitioned to SharePoint, decommissioned legacy servers, and upgraded all laptops to Windows 11. A shared file storage system for SLT and Board was implemented.

- **Planning and Governance**: New business planning tools were introduced, and operational plans refreshed. A major data archive and retention review was conducted to manage storage and compliance.

Staffing

- **Headcount and FTE:** Our team averaged a headcount of 79.08, and FTE was 68.25.
- **New Staff**: Across the year, multiple new roles were filled, including Social Prescribing Link Workers, Volunteer Support Officers, and strategic roles like LocalMotion Manager.
- **Recruitment across GM:** Launched a new Recruitment Hub with LIO partners across GM https://gmworkforcehub.org.uk/recruitment-hub/. The hub feed links directly with our Jobs page, reducing the need for admin and duplication and ensuring roles from our localities reach people across GM
- **Redundancies**: Some roles ended due to project completions or restructuring, notably in Tameside.
- **Apprenticeships**: Introduced a Business Administrator apprenticeship, supporting workforce development and social value commitments.

Learning, Development and Employee Wellbeing

- **Strengths Mapping**: A comprehensive project mapped staff skills across all levels, informing a new training calendar and development strategy.
- **Policy and Process Improvements**: Induction, performance management, and disciplinary procedures were reviewed and updated with inclusive, supportive toolkits.
- **GM Workforce Hub:** Input into design of new GM Workforce Hub, with resources and support for employees in the VCFSE sector: https://gmworkforcehub.org.uk/
- **Wellbeing Initiatives**: Relaunched the Employee Wellbeing Group, introduced Mental Health First Aiders, and celebrated staff through events like Thank You Day and long-service awards.
- **Volunteering Policy**: Launched Employer Supported Volunteering, allowing staff to contribute to community projects during work hours.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- **Strategy Implementation**: Rolled out the first EDI strategy with interactive staff sessions and team-specific action planning.

- **Anti-Racism and Inclusion**: Conducted an anti-racism survey, developed discrimination reporting guidelines, and created resources to support inclusive practices.
- **Community and Cultural Engagement**: Celebrated Diwali, Iftar, and other cultural events; shared awareness content on key dates like Black History Month and Neurodiversity Week.
- **Data and Impact**: Improved demographic data collection on members and volunteers to assess equity in services and funding. Developed inclusive recruitment guidance for members.
- **Recognition**: Achieved Disability Confident Leader status, reinforcing commitment to inclusive employment.

Risk management

We hold a detailed risk management document which is submitted to the Board of trustees of an annual basis. This risk register identifies potential risks to the organisation over a broad base of elements covering, governance, strategic, reputational, operational, safeguarding, financial and information governance. In addition it sets out mitigations and controls that are in place to reduce the risk of such incidents as far possible. Where incidents do occur, each is logged and any subsequent learning reflected in a change to process and practice where appropriate. In addition to the risk register and incident log, a compliance report details controls in place over our internal systems and this is submitted to the Board of trustees on an annual basis.

15. Financial review

Funds at 31 March 2025 amounted to £6,704,188 of which £ 5,186,179 were restricted. Expenditure in the year met the objectives that were required by the principal funding sources, as described in their funding agreements.

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The Trustees have established a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that Action Together has the ability to meet its ongoing commitments with sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of six month's running costs, redundancy costs and core committed costs
- A proportion of reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form

- The calculation of the reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle and will take into account:
- Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
- Planned activity level
- Organisation's commitments
- The reserves fund is managed and monitored at each Finance Sub-Group meeting and reported back to the full Board of Trustees within the financial reporting procedures.

The calculated reserves fund will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it takes account of changing circumstances.

The reserves position as at 31 March 2025 is as follows:

Total requirement of six months running costs, redundancy and committed core costs: £751,362

Total unrestricted reserves, cash and investments (net of tangible fixed assets): £1,494,506

The trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity, projections, cash flows and reserves and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

Investment funds are held in medium risk portfolios with the aim of growing the funds over a medium to long term (depending on the withdrawals made during the year) but the volatility of the markets over the last three to four years in particular has seen some variation in gains/losses at the year end in this respect. Despite this volatility the investments have seen average growth over the last seven years of between 3.25% and 4.9% per annum. The Board of Trustees through the Finance Sub Group review the performance of those funds and are satisfied that they are still meeting the original aims of the investments made.

Remuneration rates of key management personnel is set by the Board of Trustees via the Finance Sub Group who use a number of benchmarks and parameters to set these rates. This involves reference to local authority spine rates published in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, relevant job descriptions and levels of responsibility. In addition further benchmarking against other charities of similar size are taken into account. Action Together is a supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

16. Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name: Action Together CIO

Charity registration number: 1165512

Principal office:

80 Union Street

Oldham

OL1 1DJ

Trustees:

- C. Guereca
- A. Wiggans
- M. Patel — Appointed 06/12/2023
- N. Akhter
- M. Ashton — Appointed 12/11/2024
- D. Choudhury — Appointed 12/11/2024
- J. Mellor
- A. Nazir — Appointed 12/11/2024
- J. Rehman
- M. Widdup — Appointed 12/11/2024
- J. Yates
- A Ball — Resigned 12/11/2024
- A Begum — Resigned 12 /04/2024
- A Parkes — Resigned 12/11/2024

Auditor:
Feltons Chartered Accountants
1 The Green
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1PL

Bankers:
Unity Trust Bank PLC
9 Brindley Place
Birmingham
B1 2HP

CCLA Investment Management
Senator House
85 Queen Victoria Street
London
EC4V 4ET

Blackrock Investment Management (UK) Ltd
12 Throgmorton Avenue
London
EC2N 2DL

Castlefield
9th Floor
111 Piccadilly
Manchester
M1 2HY

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity, and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP
- Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved by Camilla Guereca on behalf of the board of trustees



on 25/09/2025

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Action Together CIO (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements through discussion with management and those charged with governance, including financial reporting and taxation legislation. We considered that extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of noncompliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit

- We addressed the risk of fraud through management override by reviewing the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making key accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business that we come across throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO (CONTINUED)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Feltons

Feltons Chartered Accountants

Chartered Accountants
& Statutory Auditors

1 The Green

London

TW9 1PL

Date: 7/10/25

Feltons Chartered Accountants are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Income from:					
Charitable activities	4	**-**	**7,734,570**	**7,734,570**	*6,190,669*
Other trading activities	5	**119,759**	**-**	**119,759**	*45,006*
Investments	6	**153,173**	**23,445**	**176,618**	*125,532*
Total income		**272,932**	**7,758,015**	**8,030,947**	*6,361,207*
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7,8	**56,084**	**928**	**57,012**	*20,698*
Charitable activities	10	**71,416**	**6,212,982**	**6,284,398**	*6,223,649*
Total expenditure		**127,500**	**6,213,910**	**6,341,410**	*6,244,347*
Net income before net (losses)/gains on investments		**145,432**	**1,544,105**	**1,689,537**	*116,860*
Net (losses)/gains on investments		**(4,686)**	**3,470**	**(1,216)**	*8,031*
Net movement in funds		**140,746**	**1,547,575**	**1,688,321**	*124,891*
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**1,377,263**	**3,638,604**	**5,015,867**	*4,890,976*
Net movement in funds		**140,746**	**1,547,575**	**1,688,321**	*124,891*
Total funds carried forward		**1,518,009**	**5,186,179**	**6,704,188**	*5,015,867*

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 54 to 76 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Note		2025 £		*2024* *£*
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		**23,503**		*18,238*
Investments	16		**1,066,735**		*1,056,300*
			1,090,238		*1,074,538*
Current assets					
Debtors	17	**849,979**		*158,870*	
Investments	18	**952,557**		*907,595*	
Cash at bank and in hand		**4,174,106**		*3,093,096*	
		5,976,642		*4,159,561*	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	**(362,692)**		*(218,232)*	
Net current assets			**5,613,950**		*3,941,329*
Total assets less current liabilities			**6,704,188**		*5,015,867*
Net assets excluding pension asset			**6,704,188**		*5,015,867*
Total net assets			**6,704,188**		*5,015,867*
Charity funds					
Restricted funds	20		**5,186,179**		*3,638,604*
Unrestricted funds	20		**1,518,009**		*1,377,263*
Total funds			**6,704,188**		*5,015,867*

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 25/09/2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Mina Patel Treasurer

The notes on pages 54 to 76 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	2025 £	*2024* *£*
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	**935,738**	*37,089*
Cash flows from investing activities		
Dividends, interests and rents from investments	**176,618**	*125,532*
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(19,696)**	*(10,317)*
Proceeds from sale of investments	**17,112**	*164,885*
Purchase of investments	**(28,762)**	*(6,901)*
Net cash provided by investing activities	**145,272**	**273,199**
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash provided by financing activities	**-**	**-**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**1,081,010**	**310,288**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	**3,093,096**	*2,782,808*
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	**4,174,106**	*3,093,096*

The notes on pages 54 to 76 form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is 80 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DJ.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS 102) published in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Action Together CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

2.2 Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

2.3 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it will be regarded as restricted.

Receipts received during the year which are not to be expended until after the balance sheet date are not recognised as income for the year and are included in income deferred.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the Charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.5 Government grants

Government grants relating to tangible fixed assets are treated as deferred income and released to the Statement of Financial Activities upon the completion of the relevant performance-related conditions. Other grants that are not subject to performance-related conditions are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities as the grant proceeds are received. Grants received prior to the revenue recognition criteria being satisfied are recognised as a liability.

2.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the revaluation model, tangible fixed assets whose fair value can be measured reliably shall be carried at a revalued amount, being their fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Revaluations are made with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount does not differ materially from that which would be determined using fair value at the end of the reporting date.

Fair values are determined from market-based evidence by appraisal that is normally undertaken by professionally qualified valuers. If there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialised nature of the tangible fixed asset and it is rarely sold, except as part of a contributing business, a Charity may need to estimate fair value using an income or depreciated replacement cost approach.

Gains and losses on revaluation are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities, with a separate revaluation reserve being shown in the Statement of funds note.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Motor vehicles	-	25% straight line
Fixtures and fittings	-	25% straight line
Office equipment	-	25% straight line

2.8 Investments

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance Sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as ‘Gains/(Losses) on investments’ in the Statement of Financial Activities.

2.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

2.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.11 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

2.12 Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Where investments in shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in income and expenditure. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised under the appropriate heading in the statement of financial activities in which the initial gain was recognised.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

2.13 Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charity to the fund in respect of the year.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.14 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(i) Recoverability of receivables

If necessary, the Charity establishes a provision for receivables that are estimated not to be recoverable. When assessing the recoverability the trustees consider factors such as aging of receivables, past experience of recoverability, and the credit profile of an individual or groups of customers.

Critical areas of judgment:

(i) In assessing whether there have been any indicators of impairment of assets, the trustees have considered both external and internal sources of information such as market conditions, counterparty credit ratings and experience of recoverability. There have been no indicators of impairment identified during the current financial year.

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Core Infrastructure	812,423	**812,423**	*814,232*
Healthwatch	296,526	**296,526**	*285,550*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	1,968,358	**1,968,358**	*2,045,889*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,204,990	**1,204,990**	*1,689,308*
LTO	124,189	**124,189**	*114,561*
Other projects & consultancy	3,328,084	**3,328,084**	*1,241,129*
	7,734,570	**7,734,570**	*6,190,669*
Total 2024	*6,190,669*	*6,190,669*	

5. Income from other trading activities

Income from fundraising events

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Activities for generating funds	119,759	**119,759**	*45,006*
Total 2024	*45,006*	*45,006*	

6. Investment income and bank interest

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Income from listed investments	7,234	23,445	**30,679**	*34,801*
Investment income - bank interest	145,939	-	**145,939**	*90,731*
	153,173	23,445	**176,618**	*125,532*
Total 2024	*96,949*	*28,583*	*125,532*	

7. Expenditure on raising funds

Support costs - fundraising expenses

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Centrally incurred support costs less those recovered from restricted funds	56,084	**56,084**	*19,788*
Total 2024	*19,788*	*19,788*	

The centrally incurred support costs amounted to £739,557 (2024: £752,238) of which £683,473 (2024: £732,450) were recovered from the administration and management of restricted costs.

8. Investment management costs

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Investment management fees	928	**928**	*910*
Total 2024	*910*	*910*	

9. Analysis of grants

	Grants to Institutions 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Grants, Grants & investments in the VCFSE	1,927,873	**1,927,873**	*1,515,286*
Grants, Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	94,693	**94,693**	*-*
Grants, LTO	34,879	**34,879**	*-*
Grants, Other projects & consultancy	-	**-**	*72,069*
	2,057,445	**2,057,445**	*1,587,355*
Total 2024	*1,587,355*	*1,587,355*	

Information relating to grants made to institutions by the Charity can be accessed at https:www.actiontogether.org.uk.

10. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund type

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	*Total 2024 £*
Core Infrastructure	-	757,147	**757,147**	*752,419*
Healthwatch	-	275,937	**275,937**	*294,284*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	-	2,243,216	**2,243,216**	*1,625,144*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	-	1,237,793	**1,237,793**	*1,866,772*
LTO	-	65,770	**65,770**	*129,799*
Other projects & consultancy	62,633	1,633,119	**1,695,752**	*1,540,452*
Governance costs	8,783	-	**8,783**	*14,779*
	71,416	6,212,982	**6,284,398**	*6,223,649*
Total 2024	*62,712*	*6,160,937*	*6,223,649*	

11. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2025 £	Grant funding of activities 2025 £	Support costs 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	*Total funds 2024 £*
Core Infrastructure	623,270	-	133,877	**757,147**	*752,419*
Healthwatch	217,937	-	58,000	**275,937**	*294,284*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	209,935	1,927,874	105,408	**2,243,217**	*1,625,144*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,025,747	94,693	117,352	**1,237,792**	*1,866,772*
LTO	25,641	34,879	5,250	**65,770**	*129,799*
Other projects & consultancy	1,432,166	-	263,586	**1,695,752**	*1,540,452*
Governance costs	-	-	8,783	**8,783**	*14,779*
	3,534,696	2,057,446	692,256	**6,284,398**	*6,223,649*
Total 2024	*3,892,478*	*1,587,355*	*743,816*	*6,223,649*	

12. Auditors' remuneration

The auditors' remuneration amounts to an auditor fee of £6,950 *(2024 - £6,500)*, and accountancy fees of £4,000 (*2024 - £4,000*).

13. Staff costs

	2025 £	*2024 £*
Wages and salaries	**2,504,247**	*2,665,904*
Social security costs	**237,432**	*254,492*
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	**142,246**	*154,975*
	2,883,925	*3,075,371*

13. Staff costs (continued)

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2025 No.	*2024* *No.*
Total employees	**79**	*89*

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2025 No.	*2024* *No.*
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	**1**	*1*
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	**1**	*1*

Key management personnel include all persons that have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. The total compensation paid to key management personnel for services provided to the charity including employer's national insurance was £161,394 (2024:£157,638).

14. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits *(2024 - £NIL)*.

During the year ended 31 March 2025, expenses totalling £NIL were reimbursed or paid directly to no Trustee *(2024 - £NIL to* for meeting expenses.

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor vehicles £	Fixtures and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2024	**24,299**	**9,872**	**61,381**	**95,552**
Additions	**-**	**-**	**19,696**	**19,696**
At 31 March 2025	**24,299**	**9,872**	**81,077**	**115,248**
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2024	**24,299**	**9,101**	**43,914**	**77,314**
Charge for the year	**-**	**335**	**14,095**	**14,430**
At 31 March 2025	**24,299**	**9,436**	**58,009**	**91,744**
Net book value				
At 31 March 2025	**-**	**436**	**23,068**	**23,504**
At 31 March 2024	*-*	*771*	*17,467*	*18,238*

16. Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £	Unlisted investments £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2024	**1,038,829**	**17,471**	**1,056,300**
Additions	**28,762**	**-**	**28,762**
Disposals	**(15,714)**	**(1,397)**	**(17,111)**
Revaluations	**(1,216)**	**-**	**(1,216)**
At 31 March 2025	**1,050,661**	**16,074**	**1,066,735**
Net book value			
At 31 March 2025	**1,050,661**	**16,074**	**1,066,735**
At 31 March 2024	*1,038,829*	*17,471*	*1,056,300*

17. Debtors

	2025 £	*2024 £*
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	**827,600**	*135,840*
Other debtors	**-**	*3,336*
Prepayments and accrued income	**22,379**	*19,694*
	849,979	*158,870*

18. Current asset investments

	2025 £	*2024 £*
Unlisted investments	**952,557**	*907,595*

Unlisted investments represent investment in a charity short term common deposit fund.

19. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	*2024* *£*
Trade creditors	**74,754**	*15,778*
Other taxation and social security	**106,455**	*123,092*
Other creditors	**1,429**	*1,240*
Accruals and deferred income	**180,054**	*78,122*
	362,692	*218,232*

	2025 £	*2024* *£*
Resources deferred during the year	**116,595**	-

The deferred income relates to funding received in advance for the following year.

20. Statement of funds

The separate analysis of restricted funds overleaf shows the movements on the material restricted funds, with the balance of the funds shown as other restricted funds.

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Development of the database	**47,005**	**-**	**(41,230)**	**-**	**5,775**
Research and capacity fund	**47,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**47,000**
	94,005	**-**	**(41,230)**	**-**	**52,775**
General funds					
General Funds - all funds	**1,283,258**	**272,932**	**(86,270)**	**(4,686)**	**1,465,234**
Total Unrestricted funds	**1,377,263**	**272,932**	**(127,500)**	**(4,686)**	**1,518,009**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Restricted funds					
Action Oldham Fund	**444,949**	**15,247**	**(23,298)**	**10,253**	**447,151**
Tameside 4 Good	**282,996**	**12,302**	**(38,867)**	**(6,783)**	**249,648**
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	**152,280**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**152,280**
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	**312,603**	**646,858**	**(606,454)**	**-**	**353,007**
One Oldham Fund	**199,432**	**3,000**	**(184,934)**	**-**	**17,498**
Oldham Local Motion	**-**	**1,477,424**	**(2,612)**	**-**	**1,474,812**
Restricted Funds - other	**2,246,344**	**5,603,184**	**(5,357,745)**	**-**	**2,491,783**
	3,638,604	**7,758,015**	**(6,213,910)**	**3,470**	**5,186,179**
Total of funds	**5,015,867**	**8,030,947**	**(6,341,410)**	**(1,216)**	**6,704,188**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Transfers in/out* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2024* £
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
Development of the database	*68,018*	*-*	*(21,013)*	*-*	*-*	*47,005*
Research and capacity fund	*-*	*-*	*-*	*47,000*	*-*	*47,000*
	68,018	*-*	*(21,013)*	*47,000*	*-*	*94,005*
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	*1,248,751*	*141,955*	*(61,487)*	*(47,000)*	*1,039*	*1,283,258*
Total Unrestricted funds	*1,316,769*	*141,955*	*(82,500)*	*-*	*1,039*	*1,377,263*

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Transfers in/out* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2024* £
Restricted funds						
Action Oldham Fund	*535,229*	*19,420*	*(120,224)*	-	*10,524*	*444,949*
Tameside 4 Good	*289,339*	*10,389*	*(13,200)*	-	*(3,532)*	*282,996*
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	*152,280*	-	-	-	-	*152,280*
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	*141,873*	*619,790*	*(449,060)*	-	-	*312,603*
One Oldham Fund	*19,609*	*301,100*	*(121,277)*	-	-	*199,432*
Restricted Funds - other	*2,435,877*	*5,268,553*	*(5,458,086)*	-	-	*2,246,344*
	3,574,207	*6,219,252*	*(6,161,847)*	-	*6,992*	*3,638,604*
Total of funds	*4,890,976*	*6,361,207*	*(6,244,347)*	-	*8,031*	*5,015,867*

21. Summary of funds

Summary of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Designated funds	**94,005**	**-**	**(41,230)**	**-**	**52,775**
General funds	**1,283,258**	**272,932**	**(86,270)**	**(4,686)**	**1,465,234**
Restricted funds	**3,638,604**	**7,758,015**	**(6,213,910)**	**3,470**	**5,186,179**
	5,015,867	**8,030,947**	**(6,341,410)**	**(1,216)**	**6,704,188**

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

As well as the carry forward figure for designated funds of £52,775 the Board of Trustees has approved a further allocation of £33,000 in the 25/26 budget. This amalgamated sum is to be used to improve business development capacity as well as our ongoing work on Civi improvements and state of the sector research.

21. Summary of funds (continued)

Summary of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Transfers in/out* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2024* £
Designated funds	*68,018*	*-*	*(21,013)*	*47,000*	*-*	*94,005*
General funds	*1,248,751*	*141,955*	*(61,487)*	*(47,000)*	*1,039*	*1,283,258*
Restricted funds	*3,574,207*	*6,219,252*	*(6,161,847)*	*-*	*6,992*	*3,638,604*
	4,890,976	*6,361,207*	*(6,244,347)*	*-*	*8,031*	*5,015,867*

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	23,503	-	**23,503**
Fixed asset investments	330,910	735,825	**1,066,735**
Current assets	1,163,597	4,813,046	**5,976,643**
Creditors due within one year	-	(362,692)	**(362,692)**
Total	1,518,010	5,186,179	**6,704,189**

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	*Restricted funds 2024 £*	*Total funds 2024 £*
Tangible fixed assets	*18,238*	-	*18,238*
Fixed asset investments	*329,923*	*726,377*	*1,056,300*
Current assets	*1,029,102*	*3,130,459*	*4,159,561*
Creditors due within one year	-	*(218,232)*	*(218,232)*
Total	*1,377,263*	*3,638,604*	*5,015,867*

23. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025 £	*2024* *£*
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	**1,688,321**	*124,891*
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**14,430**	*14,209*
Gains/(losses) on investments	**1,216**	*(8,031)*
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	**(691,109)**	*41,611*
Increase in creditors	**144,460**	*32,017*
Other interest receivable	**(176,618)**	*(125,532)*
Increase in current asset investments	**(44,962)**	*(42,076)*
Net cash provided by operating activities	**935,738**	*37,089*

24. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	*2024* *£*
Cash in hand	**4,174,106**	*3,093,096*
Total cash and cash equivalents	**4,174,106**	*3,093,096*

25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2024 £	Cash flows £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	**3,093,096**	**1,081,010**	**4,174,106**
Liquid investments	**907,595**	**44,962**	**952,557**
	4,000,691	**1,125,972**	**5,126,663**

26. Pension commitments

The group operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the group in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the group to the fund and amounted to £142,246 (2024 - £154,975). contributions totalling £Nil (2024: £Nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date and are included in creditors.

27. Related party transactions

10GM Ltd, is a company limited by guarantee, in which the founding members are Salford CVS, Bolton CVS, Action Together CIO and MACC. The Chief Executive of Action Together CIO is a Director of 10GM Ltd. Action Together CIO has received funding from 10GM during the period totalling £24,000.

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

England & Wales - Charity number 1165512

Accounts

Charity number: 1165512

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

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Annual report 2023/2024

Highlights of our impact in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

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1. Introduction from our Chair

Welcome to Action Together's annual report for the financial year ending 31 March 2023.

This has been another year where I'm proud to look back on all the achievements our charity has made. In this report you'll see a selection of our work: how we've increased the number of people involved in volunteering, developed new ways to support our member organisations to build their capacity, brought partners together from across sectors and areas to collaborate, advocated for our membership and what's important to them, and invested in fantastic initiatives and projects to strengthen our communities. If you're interested in finding out more about anything in this report, please get in touch with us.

As ever, this is just a selection of our work. We couldn't possibly include everything our teams have done to provide vital support to the local voluntary and community sector, but each member of staff contributes to our achievements every day. I'd like to thank all the team at Action Together, who led and delivered the work you'll read about. It's fantastic to see all the praise and positive feedback for our staff in this report and it's testament to their skills, care, knowledge, and ability to form strong, lasting relationships.

This was a particularly difficult time for us following the news that funding for our Community Wellbeing Programme in Tameside was to cease at the end of the year. Despite our six-year track record of exceptional delivery we were told financial pressures within the NHS would mean the contract would not be renewed.

As well as closing the entirety of the Tameside Social Prescribing Service and the NHS funded Community Wellbeing grants that went alongside it, it had a knock on to the infrastructure development work we offer in Tameside, reducing our Volunteering and Capacity Building services in the borough. We had to say goodbye to a number of committed team members and although the Board have invested to maintain some capacity this year in Tameside we now need to work alongside local partners to secure investment to build back grant investment for the voluntary and community sector and resource our work in Tameside over the longer term.

We know that funding cuts are affecting so many voluntary, community, faith and social enterprises. I'd like to reiterate our commitment to supporting the local sector in each locality we work, and thank all of those who are committed to working alongside us to protect the vital work of the sector, over what is no doubt going to be some turbulent years.

With that, I'd like to thank all the volunteers and voluntary organisations in our boroughs, including the volunteers who make up the Board of Action Together. It's an inspiration to work alongside you all.

Camilla Guereca, Chair, Action Together

2. Who we are and what we do

Action Together is the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside.

We connect people with what's happening in their community, develop community ideas into action, strengthen local organisations, and provide strategic influence for the charity and voluntary sector.

Membership of Action Together is free and open to any voluntary organisation, charity or social enterprise in Oldham, Rochdale, or Tameside.

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies, and roles.

We provide support for voluntary, community and charity organisations to establish, develop, and build their capacity including specialist information, advice, and training for staff, volunteers and trustees.

Action Together works in partnership with other charities, infrastructure organisations and public bodies and collaborates on key thematic work. We also lead and advocate for the work of organisations locally, and across Greater Manchester and the wider area.

We invest in the sector, and members can apply for funding from our grants programmes. We also provide support for groups seeking and applying for investment, and direct members to appropriate sources of funding.

3. Our Year in Numbers

- 1,590 people registered to volunteer through Action Together
- We provided 1,307 organisations with one-to-one capacity building support, advice and mentoring
- We hosted 143 training sessions and events
- 1,507 people attended our training and events
- 1,824 people took part in our partnership and thematic networks
- We directed over £2,000,000 into the sector
- 549 local organisations benefitted from funding we provided
- 4,169 people were referred through our Social Prescribing services

4. Volunteering

- 1,590 people in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside registered to volunteer through Action Together

We did it! Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation

Following months of hard work from our Volunteering Team, and colleague support from the wider Action Together team we were delighted to achieve Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA).

This is a re-accreditation of the award for us in Oldham and Tameside, but this is the first time we have been recognised for our work in Rochdale, too. We are now the recognised Volunteer Centre for Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

About VCQA

VCQA is the quality mark for organisations who are proven in delivering the five local Volunteer Centre functions:

- Strategic development of volunteering
- Good practice and development
- Brokerage
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Voice of volunteering

It provides assurance to members of the public seeking volunteering opportunities, volunteer involving organisations, partners, commissioners and funding organisations, that the holder provides a high quality and effective local service. This recognition signifies our commitment to excellence, providing high-quality volunteering services and best practice through transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Our journey to accreditation

We know that volunteering is a vital aspect of building strong and compassionate communities in our three localities. Volunteer Centres play a crucial role in connecting volunteers with groups, organisations and initiatives that need their support. Our Volunteering Strategy outlines our plans and promises for the next five years and further strengthens our charitable purpose:

- To strengthen the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector
- To enable positive social change and promote social justice

We are proud of our Volunteering offer and the positive impact it has on our communities. This recognition signifies our commitment to excellence, providing high-quality volunteering services and best practice through transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. It will help us to assure our volunteers, communities, and stakeholders of our commitment to high standards of excellence.

Following a period of stringent and independent assessment from NAVCA, we have been able to demonstrate that our Volunteer Centre strategically delivers best practice processes through our extensive programme of activities and engagement with our members, groups and volunteers.

"We are delighted with the outcome of this award, especially for our teams who are passionate about volunteering and the difference it makes to the individual and our communities. With this award, we will continue to champion and develop volunteering with our members and partners across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, to ensure volunteering is recognised, celebrated and available to all."

Sian Goodwin, Action Together Tameside Operations Manager

A few highlights of our feedback and what we've learnt:

- We are flexible and responsive to the needs of our volunteers, but we can do more to further embed the lived experience of those who volunteer and create a strong evidence base to advocate for and represent volunteers
- Our members view our Volunteer Centre as a 'reliable and trusted partner' describing how we 'focus on their strategic needs' and we have robust policies and practices in place to support them
- We are responsive to opportunities that may arise to develop volunteering roles and we will grow further in this area by being proactive across all three sites and understanding different underrepresented groups in volunteering
- Our Volunteering Strategy developed as part of our submission to the VCQA lays out our aspirations clearly and is the key to our progress, which includes making volunteering accessible to everyone re regardless of the time, location and other barriers

"The strengths of the Volunteer Centre lie in its good reputation with Volunteer Involving Organisations and other external partners and its ability to leverage it at the strategic level. The organisation prides itself on being flexible and responsive to the needs of individual volunteers. Vision for Volunteering 2028 is an example of good practice that would be enviable by many counterparts in the country."

"The volunteer centre is very strong in promoting volunteering and volunteering roles, including as a way into employment.

The Volunteer Centre demonstrated that it listens. One of the interviewees commented: "They have always our interest at heart, and they are meeting our priorities"."

We are delighted with the outcome of this award, especially for our teams who are passionate about volunteering and the difference it makes. With this award, we will continue to champion and develop volunteering with our members and partners, to ensure volunteering is recognised, celebrated and available to all.

Vision for Volunteering 2028 – Our Volunteering Strategy

We were proud to launch our new Volunteering Strategy this year.

We believe that volunteering is at the heart of creating, supporting and maintaining social infrastructure. Our Vision for Volunteering will ensure that we develop and champion volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital.

By 2028 the Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside will be great places to volunteer – places where volunteering is understood and appreciated, appropriately resourced, and volunteers are supported and recognised for their valuable contribution to the social infrastructure of our communities.

Our new Volunteering strategy, which relates closely to our organisational strategy, features the following three priorities:

1. **Awareness and Appreciation**

We want volunteering to be integral to the way our communities support each other. We want institutions to recognise volunteering in all its forms, and for there to be much more flexibility for people to move between volunteering opportunities within a place.

2. **Power, Leadership, Collaboration and Experimentation**

Our priority to advance our approach to social change, relies on us developing and supporting leaders within our communities and to support the devolution of decisions closer to communities.

3. **Equality and Inclusion**

We know that volunteering is not equally accessible, that people from sections of our communities are less likely to volunteer and have varying experiences when they do. We want to change this. We also firmly believe that volunteering is a choice for the individual and understand that volunteering is not for everyone, but that access to it should be.

See our full strategy at https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/volunteering-strategy-2023-2028

Developing Volunteer Leaders

Volunteer Manager Zone

As well as making sure that volunteering is an inclusive, high quality and rewarding experience, we want those working with volunteers to have the resources and support they need to make this possible.

We provide extensive support to volunteer-involving organisations to develop their policies and processes, and this year developed a new online Volunteer Manager Zone to offer additional support so our member can find the resources and support they need on our website as well as by contacting us in person, over the phone, or by email. The Volunteer Manager Zone hosts information on

- **Good Practice Volunteer Management**

Our Volunteer and Community Development team created this video to accompany our Good Practice in Volunteer Management factsheet.

The Good Practice video gives a brief summary of the key points of good volunteer management. From developing your volunteer roles, recruiting and inducting new volunteers, to ensuring your volunteers feel valued and appreciated.

- **Support to Recruit Volunteers**

Support from developing appealing and engaging volunteer roles, to sharing on our online directory, to actively promoting roles through our community outreach work, to managing roles in our volunteer manager accounts.

- **Volunteer Manager Forum**

We host a quarterly online forum bringing together volunteer managers from across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. This is a supportive space and opportunity for Volunteer Managers to connect with others doing the same role, share any organisational updates, as well as current successes and challenges relating to volunteering.

- **Resources**

Downloadable factsheets and templates our members can use to create their policy documents, handbooks, checklists, volunteer agreements, application forms, and other resources essential to voluntary organisations. Throughout the year we've developed and created new resources in response to feedback from our Volunteer Manager Forums, such as guidance on involving refugees and asylum seekers in volunteering.

- **Volunteer Training Videos**

Our Volunteer Training playlist features core topics that are important for all volunteers to be aware of. These bitesize videos can be used by our member organisations to provide new volunteers with a basic understanding of some key areas, and also as an annual refresher for long-standing volunteers.

Volunteer Manager Training

We offer Volunteer Managers Database Training, to help support our member organisations to write effective volunteer advertisements and upload them onto our website.

As well as practical support, this training also took a much more holistic approach to what a volunteer opportunity could look like, and asked participants to think about what processes they already have in place to support volunteers, as well as what else they can implement to help create more supportive and meaningful opportunities for volunteers. This included practical considerations around expenses, equipment and accessibility, as well as more nuanced discussions around environment and creating a sense of support and belonging.

This led to our development of a new Volunteer Manager Training offer, focused around all aspects of the volunteering journey and to be launched at the start of the next year as part of our refreshed training offer.

Engaging Volunteers

Volunteer eBulletin

Our regular eBulletins are key to communicating with our member organisations and partners, with our Funding, Training and locality eBulletins going to thousands of people across our communities.

Our Volunteering team wanted to develop a volunteer-focused monthly eBulletin, with the aim of promoting local volunteer roles We'd had success during the Covid pandemic in setting up Volunteering Facebook groups to engage volunteers with roles local to them, so the eBulletin built on this.

Each month the team highlight volunteer opportunities, events, training, news, resources and job listings to support people in their volunteer journey. Each month we theme some recommended

roles, for example highlighting outdoor roles in summer, or spotlighting roles supporting children and families.

Since launching in April, the Volunteer eBulletin has become a brilliant addition to our engagement activity. By the end of the year, it was our third most popular mailing behind our Funding and Training eBulletins, growing from 4,009 recipients in April 2023 to 4,896 in March 2024, a fantastic increase of 887 people (+22%). The open and click through rates are also high, pointing to an engaged volunteer audience, and every open and click through is someone getting involved in volunteering that may not have done so otherwise.

"Action Together have supported Hattersley Projects to recruit new volunteers by advertising volunteer opportunities on their website and social media. The advertisements quickly found us six new volunteers. Some volunteers have expressed an interest in gardening, some like woodwork and general maintenance such as painting, and others come to socialise and learn new skills particularly about sustainability, growing flowers, fruit and vegetables."

Sharmain, Volunteer Lead at Hattersley Projects

Volunteers' Week

Every year we celebrate Volunteers' Week, joining in the celebrations and following this year's theme, taking time to 'Celebrate and Inspire'. We celebrated all the volunteers in our communities who go above and beyond just to 'give something back', and shared some inspiring stories in the hope we could encourage others to get involved.

We relaunched our popular **Volunteer Celebration Fund**, where local groups can apply for grants up to £500 for activities that help them recruit, retain and recognise their volunteers.

"We all had a wonderful afternoon celebrating and may thanks go to Action Together and their team for the support we receive, especially from Adele who is a gem.

Our volunteer members, many whom live alone, state that having a lunch together is the highlight of their week. Friendships are formed over the weeks, and even more so over the intimacy of a meal. Thank you so much for your support."

Royton & Crompton Over 60's, who hosted a celebration lunch for 44 of their volunteers.

"All the volunteers really appreciated getting together to enjoy the barbecue, cake and the good weather.

The application was very simple and straightforward - thank you Action Together for all your support. We know we can ring any one of your staff for advice and guidance and this is very much appreciated."

SAWN, who held a barbeque at GROWE, their community Orchard

"Had a wonderful few hours at the Hunt Lane Tavern being treated to lunch and drinks with fellow volunteers. Thank you Action Together for making it possible. So nice for volunteers to be appreciated in this way."

Chadderton Together, who hosted a celebratory lunch at Lydia's Tearoom, their community hub and café

Find out about some of the activities and groups we supported with the Volunteer Celebration Fund.

We heard some **Volunteer Voices** by interviewing our volunteers and asking them about their motivation to volunteer and how they personally benefit from their efforts and contributions.

"My experience of being a volunteer with Action Together has been a positive one. It has provided me with some structure, kept my administration skills up to date and allowed me to maintain connections with people. The thought that I am hopefully giving back and being useful in a small way. I am truly impressed with how inclusive the team is through engaging with volunteers, supporting them and promoting volunteer opportunities.

This works perfect around my current sixth form priorities and I can be flexible with the event volunteering.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to volunteer."

Sarinah Khaliq, Action Together Administration and Event Volunteer

"It gave me the chance to increase my confidence when talking to people and helped me to improve on my communication skills. It also allowed me to experience a different cultural side to Oldham as I had never been to a mosque previously. The free food was a bonus!"

Connor Ross, Community Response and Dr Kershaw's Hospice Volunteer

We also asked our volunteers to put into words the impact volunteering has made on them personally, and their responses produced this word cloud.



The Oldham team hosted our annual **Volunteer Fair** in August. This event gave local organisations the chance to shout about their fantastic volunteering opportunities and members of the public a chance to find out more about what is available to them.

Stalls from organisations with varied volunteer opportunities filled the streets of Oldham Town Centre, ranging from volunteering with the police, fire service, hospices, gardening, arts and crafts and even with us at Action Together. Watch this video for a recap of the day and to hear what residents thought of the event and volunteering.

"I attended the Volunteer Fair because as well as looking for a part time job, I am looking to volunteer. It was amazing! I learned a lot of new things about what you can do. I enjoyed meeting new people. I didn't want to go home!"

"Thank you for all the hard work you all put into the Volunteer Fair. We met so many lovely people, swapped details with other companies, and dare we say it, despite the downpour, we had a thoroughly good time! Thank you again for welcoming us."

"It was a really nice event and there were definitely a lot of people speaking to us who had come along purely to attend the event which was positive. We had some really lovely conversations and Gary (the hopeful gardener) you introduced to us has already been in touch."

"I just want to thank you for the amazing Volunteer Fair. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and received a lot of information that I'm working through. I never realised there was so much going on. I'm spoilt for choice."

The 2023 **Tameside Toy Appeal** was another fantastic success thanks to the work of our amazing volunteers who worked tirelessly to collect and drop off toys to our Tameside communities, Children's Centres, local businesses, and of course the generous donations of toys and gifts from Tameside residents.

Thank you to our partners Tameside Radio and Reporter and Tameside Council's Children Centres, who work hard to make the Tameside Toy Appeal so successful each year.

This year, despite such difficult and challenging times, the Toy Appeal received 488 referrals and over 1,000 children and young people received a gift on Christmas Day. In addition, our Just Giving page raised a further £2,768!

"Thanks to the Tameside Toy Appeal 2023, no child will go without presents this Christmas. I would like to thank all of the businesses that have contributed, the community organisations, the community itself, the Family Hubs and Children's Centres, and Action Together, for making this happen. Thank you."

Councillor Tafheen Sharif, Civic Mayor of Tameside

"I decided to do Stoptober and give up chocolate. I started raising money through sponsorships and then went out and bought lots of toys. It makes me happy knowing that there will be children with smiles on their faces on Christmas Day because of what I've done to help."

Harrison Tucker - Age 11

"Incredibly proud of our team! We've been working with Action Together for over five years, to help provide a gift for children in the local community, through the Tameside Toy Appeal. Even as a global organisation, we'll always strive to make a positive impact to those on our doorstep in Greater Manchester."

Brother UK

Volunteering in Place

We continued to deliver our Volunteer Hubs. Our Volunteering teams in Oldham and Tameside are based in the heart of communities, with extensive knowledge of local roles that might suit volunteers. By working closely with our Development and Social Prescribing teams, we connected potential volunteers with roles that suit them in their local area.

As Action Together works across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, if a volunteer is looking for a specific role we can also connect them with a relevant opportunity that might not be in their area. We've seen great success with this model in Oldham and Tameside,

In Rochdale, many people interested in volunteering prefer to meet our Volunteer Support Officers in person to explore how to register as a volunteer and find suitable opportunities. As a result we continue to coordinate regular outreach events across the borough that allow us to connect more meaningfully with individuals and better understand their needs, interests and strengths.

With these regular events, we have been able to grow our profile across the borough and connect with people who may have otherwise been unaware of Action Together. Additionally, these events create a space that other organisations can signpost individuals to.

When these stands are unstaffed, we have created signposting to our website or staff emails so that potential volunteers can connect with a member of our team and explore all our regularly changing opportunities.

Our member organisations and local services can also meet with our teams in place to discuss their volunteering needs. We were approached by Rochdale Advocacy Together Hub who were looking for volunteers. We met with Alex from Rochdale Advocacy Together Hub to go through our offer of support and what they specifically needed. Their roles were added to our website the same day, and roles were shared with our registered volunteers and added to our volunteer eBulletin.

"As a service we have valued the support from Action Together. We have really struggled to obtain volunteers in the past, however with the support we have seen an influx in interested volunteers. The induction process begins again this month and we have at least four volunteers. The Action Together team have kept in regular contact with myself and supported the process and we have really benefited from this."

Alex, Rochdale Advocacy Together Hub

Volunteering and Employability

We continued to develop our support and overall offer around employability.

In **Oldham**, we partnered with employability programme providers Ingeus and Get Oldham Working. Their employees were provided with information about our service offer and referrals, and our team delivered a series of volunteer information sessions to clients (engaging with 41 individuals in total). All were offered 1:1 support to register with our service and follow-up appointments in collaboration with their case workers. Having proven to be a successful model we have agreed with both providers to continue to deliver this work on a quarterly basis.

With funding from LocalMotion and Oldham's Poverty Action Network we developed and recruited into a partnership Volunteering Officer role with Oldham Job Centre, with collaboration on a national level through the Poverty Truth Network. Oldham is the first locality to embark on this 12-month pilot focusing on evidencing the importance of volunteering on individuals' employment journey. With other locality's exploring funding opportunities to trial similar pilots this project has the potential to influence on a national level.

In **Rochdale**, we saw an increase in referrals from Work and Skills and the Jobcentres. We met Job Coaches at Middleton Jobcentre to give them an understanding of the support we can offer their job

seekers interested in volunteering. This partnership led to us attending the Jobcentre one day a month, where work coaches arrange appointments for job seekers to meet with us to discuss volunteering and find potential roles. This led to successfully matching people with roles to develop their employability skills, including one person who was matched and placed in a role within one day.

Similarly, in **Tameside** we have held monthly drop-ins at JobCentre Plus in Ashton on the last Friday of every month, to provide support to people looking to increase their employment prospects.

"We were so pleased we could form a co-operative relationship with Action Together's Volunteering Service. We've long recognised the absolute importance of volunteering within the local community and especially for DWP claimants looking to get back into work. Volunteering is viewed as a safe place to test the waters when someone has been out of work for a sustained period as there is no negative impact on their benefits if it does not work out. It is only ever seen in a positive way for DWP as it gives claimants the confidence to take the next step from volunteering to paid employment."

JobCentre Plus Ashton

Our teams also created new marketing materials around volunteering and employability, to directly target those looking to develop their skills. Student Volunteering Week in February also gave us an opportunity to speak to students about volunteering as a way to develop new skills and enhance their employability. We visited Oldham College, delivered a drop in Student Volunteering Hub, and targeted priority student groups including ESOL students and those retaking Maths and English GCSEs.

Case Study: Meet Abdulrahman

Abdulrahman Mamman volunteers for Oldham-based charity Making Space, which provides health and social care services for adults with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, dementia and their carers.

Abdulrahman, 17, decided to volunteer because he is hoping to go to university to study medicine. He wanted to volunteer to experience, learn and analyse if the career of his choice was what he wanted as a lifetime career. He attended an open day at college where he made an appointment with one of our Volunteering Team Project Support Officers.

Abdulrahman was referred to Making Space, where he now volunteers three sessions a week, getting involved in quizzes, music and dance. He volunteers to gain experience in a number of life and transferable skills. The activities delivered are for those individuals suffering from mental illness, dementia, multiple sclerosis and Parkinsons disease, where the activities stimulate their mind and body. He volunteers to make a positive impact within the community, especially with older people as they are very isolated and in Abdulrahman's own words he said: "I really enjoy bringing joy to their lives."

Volunteering has helped him to feel healthier, physically and mentally. He has learnt lots of new skills, gained confidence, improved understanding of different medical issues and barriers which has

opened up other doors for him. He is starting volunteering at Oldham Hospital in the Acute Medical Unit. He added:

"It's about gaining many skills for myself and making other people happy. Volunteering gave me the ability to try new activities, get active and be more informed. The biggest impact was applying for experience in a hospital, getting an interview and taking up the volunteer role at Oldham Hospital. Once again, through Action Together's Volunteering Team, I am applying for a third volunteer opportunity working with children and young people so that I have experience in working with a wide spectrum of individuals. I love helping and supporting people from all walks of life and have realised a career in medicine could definitely be for me."

Employer Supported Volunteering

Employer Supported Volunteering, or corporate volunteering, is where the employees of an organisation take time to volunteer during work hours or organise volunteer activities.

Employees might choose to support a charity or community group, or take up an opportunity provided by their workplace.

Our previous work developing and promoting our Employer Supported Volunteering offer led to more workplaces contacting us to arrange volunteering activities for their staff.

We targeted local businesses to get involved in local volunteering, which led to us working with National Gas in November. We spoke to a few of our member groups to find a suitable match for the organisation, and found The Bond Board could provide what National Gas were looking for. The Bond Board run coffee mornings from a church in the Rochdale Borough on a Friday morning, and needed volunteers to support in the kitchen as well as front of house.

National Gas were more than happy to support, and since volunteering in November they have developed a partnership and have returned to volunteer again for The Bond Board.

"I just want to say a big thank you for allowing myself and team to come and volunteer on Wednesday, we had a great time.

I really enjoyed having an opportunity to understand The Bond Board, the super hard-working team you have there and also meet the people who depend on your services. Also thank you Laura at Action Together for helping set this up for us."

Emma Bellis, National Gas

"It was so good to have four Employer Supported Volunteers from National

Gas with us at our Coffee Morning today. They got stuck in with supporting our existing volunteers in the kitchen and helping to manage our donations table. They enjoyed it so much they want to come back!!!

A big thank you to Action Together for facilitating what will hopefully be a brilliant ongoing partnership."

The Bond Board

We were approached by Hyde-based Findel Education with a request to help them find an opportunity for their staff to get involved in volunteering.

We were already supporting our member organisation Hattersley Projects to recruit new volunteers by advertising their volunteer opportunities through the volunteering directory on our website, social media and volunteering emails. This quickly found six new volunteers to support their projects, helping them get involved in gardening, woodwork, painting, and learning new skills around sustainability and growing flowers, fruit and vegetables.

As part of our Employer Supported Volunteering offer in Tameside, we then linked Hattersley Projects with Findel Education, and a team of four employees attended for a volunteer day.

" Action Together made the link with Findel Education Ltd and a team of four employees joined us for a volunteer day. They cleared the space beside our entrance and planted flowers to make the area more welcoming. The difference it has made is huge and we have had nothing but compliments about the first impressions walking into our site.

A massive thank you to Katie, Maria and Paul who worked tirelessly in the heat to make a huge difference to an area of the centre and a big difference for their community. It's employers and people that volunteer here who make the biggest difference and can help us in many different ways. Thanks also to Action Together who supported us, and who continue to do so."

Sharmain, Volunteer Lead at Hattersley Projects

Following their volunteer day at Hattersley Projects, Findel Education continued their drive to support local charities, and Action Together connected them with Community Matters.

Community Matters is run through the Hattersley Community Hub and helps support families across Tameside. The aim of the campaign was to help families in need by providing pencil cases filled with stationery to children to use as part of their learning. For many families the cost of stationery is one that very few can afford. This appeal goes a long way in ensuring children have the equipment they need to learn and that they don't feel that they are missing out because they don't have some of the things that other children do.

"We were more than happy to donate 100 filled pencil cases to their cause as it's important to us here at Findel that we support children's education however we can. Part of our ethos 'growing education for generations' is to ensure that everyone gets a fair chance, and that's why campaigns like these ones really matter. Thanks to Jacqueline and Janet for visiting and we can't wait to hear how this campaign makes a difference.

Action Together helps bring people and communities together and we simply wouldn't get to hear about all these amazing charities and groups if it wasn't for you, so thank you!"

Claire Greave, Findel Education

Findel were thrilled to support and, following their initial involvement with Community Matters, they have gone on to support them on more occasions - with donations of toys and games at Christmas to distribute across the community, and with another employee volunteer day supporting The Bread and Butter Thing in Hattersley.

5. Capacity Building

- We provided 1,307 organisations with one-to-one capacity building support, advice and mentoring
- We hosted 143 training sessions and events
- 1,507 people attended our training sessions and events

Organisation Health Checks

Following development and trial in the previous year, we publicly launched our new Organisation Health Checks this year.

Our online Organisation Health Checks are designed to support groups and organisations to reflect, and review how their organisation is performing.

They are a practical, development tool which allows you, along with help from one of our experienced Community Development Workers, to identify strengths, as well as areas for development, and will support you to:

- Prioritise areas of development and identify clear steps to reaching these goals
- Reflect on your future sustainability and create discussion points for your management committee to focus and prioritise plans

- Review your impact and the difference you are making in communities, and support to consider progress towards your overall mission
- Support to think about what is needed before you embark on a new stage of development e.g. applying for a larger grant, leasing a building or recruiting staff members

There are nine areas of the Organisation Health Check:

- Vision and Mission
- Financial Management
- Governance
- Policies and Procedures
- Staff and Volunteers
- Facilities and IT
- Quality and Impact
- Communications and Marketing
- Partnerships

The Health Check can be completed in stages, and can also be revisited over a period, to track progress and development.

As the support that you may require changes, Health Checks can be completed regularly for us to better understand your changing needs to ensure that we are providing the most appropriate support for your group.

The information gathered through the Health Checks will also support us to have a greater understanding of our membership and communities across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. The next steps are for us to dig deeper into the data from the Health Checks and use this to provide greater insight into the sector and its needs for system partners and the wider sector.

We'd encourage all of our member organisations to arrange a Health Check with their local Community Development Worker. Visit https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/organisationhttps://www.actiontogether.org.uk/organisation-health-checkshealth-checks

We have recently developed a new capacity building tool to use alongside groups to support our work to develop groups and organisations. The Organisation Health Check toolkit, enables group leaders, comittee members and trustees to work alongside their development worker to reflect on the 'health' of their organisation and enables them to prioritise and plan the work that they need to undertake to have a thriving, sustainable, organisation that delivers maximum impact against their organisations purpose.

Case Study: Royton and Crompton Over 60's Club

Uzma, the Community Development Worker for North Oldham, used the Health Check tool with Royton and Crompton Over 60's club to reflect and review how their organisation was performing.

Uzma moved from working in East Oldham to North Oldham and found that using the Health Check with Royton and Crompton Over 60s Club enabled her to gain great insight into the group and how we can work alongside them to support their development.

It enabled us to:

- Prioritise areas of development and identify clear steps to reaching these goals
- Reflect on their future sustainability and create discussion points for their management committee to focus and prioritise plans
- Review their impact and the difference they are making in communities, and support to consider progress towards their overall mission
- Support to think about what is needed before they embark on a new stage of development e.g. applying for a larger grant, recruiting staff members, recruiting more volunteers, renting out their space

"Without the help of Action Together, we wouldn't be here today. The Capacity Building team have given the best support we could expect. It has been a lifeline for us.

As for the Organisation Health Check, it's good to reflect how far you have come and how many lives you have touched along the way." Janet, Royton and Crompton Over 60's Club

Case Study: Tameside Deaf Association

Mandy from Tameside Deaf Association requested support from our Ashton Community Development Worker to help review their organisation policies. To understand more about the organisation and the type of support they may need, we completed an organisation Health Check with the group to establish which areas of development they wanted to focus on.

The result of the Health Check identified areas around governance, in particular their legal structure, and support around trustees roles and responsibilities.

Due to the extra support members of the committee would need to attend an online training session, our team of development workers developed a bespoke training session for the group.

With help from an interpreter and some specifically designed resources, we were able to provide a session which met the needs of the group and help them to think about future sustainability of the group.

Our team will continue to work with Tameside Deaf Association, and next steps include incorporating the organisation and achieving Quality in Action Award.

"Thanks for delivering face-to-face Introduction to Trustee Role & Responsibilities training with our trustees, really enjoyed it!" Mandy,

Tameside Deaf Association

Quality in Action

The Quality in Action Award is our recognised framework for voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations working across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside to prove their impact. The award is an independent, local seal of approval which publicly demonstrates commitment to safeguarding, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Our dedicated Community Development Workers work alongside our member organisations to help them meet criteria that makes sure they have the right things in place, with practical advice, resources and support to help develop the policies and procedures that are right for each organisation. The QiAA is free and open to groups of any size. The award demonstrates to local commissioners, funders, beneficiaries and other stakeholders that organisations are delivering quality activities and services.

"Achieving the award has been great! It has ensured we have the correct policies and processes in place to help safeguard our service users, volunteers, staff and the charity."

Rehana Begum, Diversity Matters North West

"It gives me a great sense of joy to have achieved the Quality in Action Award. It will show that Positive Steps not only provides an excellent service to clients, it shows we have quality systems in place.

I would really recommend getting this accreditation, I was able to fit the work needed alongside my day-to-day work duties. The support from Action Together was excellent."

Martin Sutton, Service Lead at Positive Steps

"We decided to undertake the Quality in Action Award as we had started the process to become a charity. We wanted to grow and ensure we have good governance in place and the QiAA was the perfect approach for us.

We believe we are now in a position to apply for funding, stating we have the Quality in Action Award, which will give us an advantage."

Become United

"It feels great to have achieved the Quality in Action Award from Action Together!

I would tell other organisations that they should definitely complete it. There is a lot of support available to help you through the process and it can help you to identify areas of improvement.
I would like to give a special shout out to Jane! She helped us every step of the way and was there to answer any questions we had. She went above and beyond to make sure we achieved the award."

Zaheen, Oldham Boxing

"Many thanks to Action Together for helping us to achieve our QiAA!

It's good to know that our commitment to what we are doing as a Community Group is recognised. I'm sure it will help us when we apply for funding."

Sandra Kiy, St Gabriel's Community Group

"We are really pleased to have achieved the Quality in Action Award. It was really easy to follow, the guidance that Action Together provide and the support you receive is excellent. We would recommend it. It really helps you look at what you're doing and highlights any changes you need to make." Donna

Calverly, Support Manager for KeyRing Living Support Networks

"The support from Action Together was amazing! We learnt so much about our business and about our service users, our principles and our strengths and the areas we need to develop to reach our aspirations - as a direct result of the process we have a new board member and lots of volunteers. I cannot thank Action Together enough!"

Erica Matthews, Creative Health and Wellbeing

“We've learnt so much during this process and shall display our award with pride! What a pleasure it was to work with Adele from Action Together. You've been kind, generous with your time and a massive support to us. It really has felt like we’ve been working with a friend.”

Emma and Alison, Raise Tuition CIC

“We would like to extend a huge thank you to the team at Action Together!

We would recommend all the organisations out there complete the Quality in Action Award. I can assure you it will be worth it, and it will dramatically enhance and help your organisation."

Nicky Iginla, Caring and Sharing Rochdale

“I am really proud of the team working hard to gain this award and thankful of Nayan at Action Together who has supported us all the way. It has been a great journey in achieving this as we have involved the volunteers and team.

This will really help our organisation as we now have everything in one place when looking for funding or taking on new volunteers, it has made us stronger as an organisation and stronger in our plans to support our community.”

Kim Rogers, Community Engagement Coordinator at the Salvation Army

"We're delighted to have received the Quality in Action Award!

This award not only strengthens our credibility but also fortifies our organisation's sustainability and lasting impact.

Thank you to Jonathan for all of his support with this too."

Live Great Adventures

“We are extremely proud of the organisation in achieving the Quality in Action Award.

You must definitely go for this award as it makes you evaluate and improve your organisation!

Many thanks to the team at Action Together for always being there when we need help with anything! We value and appreciate you all."

Audrey Murphy and the SAWN Team

"We are so pleased to have been awarded Action Together's Quality in Action Award. We were able to put all the correct policies and procedures in place, meaning we can ensure the activities and services we offer to our local community are run safely and effectively. It will also stand us in good stead for accessing resources for any future developments.

Thank you Action Together!"

Jo Saunders - Community Development Worker, New Life Church

Community Focused, Community Based

We developed our capacity building model over the last few years to more closely integrate into place – the local neighbourhoods where our member organisations are based.

We invite local organisations and members of the public to drop-in and see us at our placebased hubs to find out about local volunteering, funding for their ideas, making connections in the community, support for their community group, and community wellbeing.

Being rooted in communities means we can connect more effectively with people, groups, and our cross-sector partners. We promote our attendance online and in-place, with regular weekly bases meaning we can build up familiarity with the venues in which we’re working and the communities they support. Community bases cover a range of different venues including community libraries, wellbeing hubs, places of worship, and VCFSE owned and led spaces.

This model has led to deepening relationships as well as the development of new local initiatives. This year we rolled the model out in Rochdale, so all three of our localities now have dedicated place-based Community Development leads, supporting groups in capacity building in the community where they are based.

The reduction in capacity of our Tameside team means we will need to change our model in the borough, but we plan on continuing our place-based model while reviewing the areas and frequency with which we can attend.

"It has been amazing working in partnership with Action Together Community Development and Social Prescribing Team over the last few years. They have been able to support the group formalise into a legal structure which has allowed them to open their own bank account giving them the opportunity to successfully gain funding to help them keep delivering their session for the next 12-18 months."

Craig Meredith, Irwell Valley Homes

Training and Workforce Development

Training continued to be a popular source of support for our members.

Across the year, we delivered 147 training sessions, with 1,507 attendees at these sessions. This is alongside bespoke training we offer to individual member organisations.

Our regular training eBulletin continued to be popular, reaching 4,822 people every fortnight and leading to high uptake of our training offer, particularly our core training such as bid writing and safeguarding.

This year we received UKSPF funding to refresh and relaunch the training offer for the local sector.

Our new Workforce Development Lead reviewed our training offer alongside our teams and looked at ways to improve the offer for our members.

Training will be offered in a variety of formats, with online, face-to-face and also hybrid sessions, making the training flexible and available to a wide range of people. We've also improved the processes around our training, with more detailed reminders and support available for attendees before and after sessions.

We launched the new training offer with extensive promotions to our members, including a new interactive Training Calendar so members can see when training is coming up across the year. This will help our members attend future sessions in the event they can't make a date or places are booked up.

Training on offer will include:

- Financial management for small groups
- Getting started with funding applications
- Child protection awareness
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Safeguarding Adults
- Equality and the Law
- Data Protection and Cyber Security
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Choosing the Right Legal Structure
- How to be an Effective Trustee
- Creating a Fundraising Strategy
- Managing Events

We continued to record and upload selected training sessions to our YouTube channel, with over 10,000 views of our training videos across the year.

"It's really good Action Together put on events like this!"

Case Study: Fitton Hill ABCD Mapping

During Quarter 3, Commissioned by ForHousing, Action Together worked in partnership with Unlimited Potential to conduct an asset based community development mapping project on Fitton Hill, this was a part of a wider North West Commission focussing also on communities in Salford and in Merseyside.

The use of the Asset Based methodology was agreed to identify assets and support ForHousing and partners. As well as to empower and support communities based on their strengths and potential. It also served to identify any gaps and support the community to identify the resources they require.

The project supports ForHousing to understand who its tenants are, the communities they live in and how best to work alongside communities and tenants, by:

- mapping and understanding similar work that has been undertaken in areas, to ensure we do not duplicate and this work addresses gaps
- mapping the 'resources' available in the community - individuals, groups, institutions, physical
- engaging with local communities to understand the key issues faced by communities, the support available and any identify any gaps in support
- understanding the barriers to engagement with ForHousing and supporting the development of ways to better engage and communicate with tenants and communities

Action Together's Community Development Worker worked in partnership with ForHousing to engage with the community using several methods including one to one conversations, holding focus groups, visiting local groups and working in partnership with ForHousing to develop and deliver a survey to residents to gain their views.

We facilitated a number of steering groups which were very successful and enabled people to collaborate in various activities and projects. Examples include joint carol service between Salvation Army, local primary schools, Local Food First CIC who helped with lantern making sessions, choir from primary schools.

Following discussions with local parents and carers, Action Together arranged discussions between Forhousing and district staff, along with local residents and other stakeholders to renovate the St Martins pocket park which had stalled since June 2023. A focus group has been arranged in February to consult local residents about what they may want in the pocket park and £30,000 has been identified and secured for this work, along with funding from Forhousing for consultation.

The project has successfully achieved its goals of producing an indepth ABCD mapping report which ForHousing can use to build upon their offer to its residents, a physical asset map for Fitton Hill which

clearly details the assets in the area. Along with the enhanced partnership working which has occurred as a result of this project.

Case Study: LADS (Lads Against Depression and Suicide)

Tameside Community Development Worker Dawn was approached by Dez, who works for Tameside South Foodbank. Through his work at the Foodbank, Dez is meeting males who need further support. This, along with Dez's own life experiences has led him to set up a project called LADs (Lads Against Depression & Suicide).

The project will provide peer support and befriending to males over 18 who may be struggling with anxiety, anger management and general mental health issues. They will do this by using fishing, gardening, woodwork, etc as a tool to help men.

Dez had also been talking with the Healthy Hyde Team who had identified a gap in provision for men in the area and have said that they would work with LADs and refer into a service like this.

Dawn supported LADS in a number of ways:

- Providing advice on different legal structures and support to think about the which would suit his group best, and support to write a constitution. Further support to think about what else exists for men in Tameside and type of activities to run.
- Support to write safeguarding policy, and signpost to Action Together Safeguarding Training
- Guidance on creating a monitoring form to use with clients as part of referral process and measuring impact
- Additional support provided to project lead who is neuro diverse and requested additional support
- Support to secure funding from Onward Homes to pilot the project over 6 months

"Working with Dawn has been a pleasure, and she is very easy to work with. She knows her stuff. Dawn has gone above and beyond to help us get the things in place to set up LADS".

Dez, LADS

Case Study: KaskoSan

KaskoSan is a local community group who aims to empower Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and other vulnerable U.K. migrant groups living in isolation and/or with mental health issues. They support their community by providing information, helping to cope with discrimination and boosting their social inclusion through one on one, group support, regular and one-off activities.

Juice and Maria from KaskoSan contacted Action Together seeking help with sourcing and writing funding for the organisation and for support with connecting with likeminded organisations across

the borough. They realised after initial conversations that they needed help with working out the best legal structure for the organisation to grow and develop with.

Due to family and work commitments, Juice and the trustees found it difficult to access workshop sessions and other members of KaskoSan faced language barriers whilst attending.

Action Together's Community Development Worker meets with KaskoSan regularly and offers one to one support at a pace suitable for their needs.

This has given the group the confidence to apply for several different grants including Awards for All funding to deliver a pilot project working with Roma families, sharing their culture with host families using the medium of dance. The project has been very successful and KaskoSan are now working with their community development worker to develop a larger Reaching Communities bid to extend the project.

"We're getting help with setting up the right structure, trustee recruitment, constitution, strategic planning, fundraising, networking, partnership building and management, CIO registration, facilitation of trustees meetings, polishing out all of our policies and getting signed up to the training we need.

All Kaskosan trustees, staff and volunteers are extremely grateful!" Juice,

KaskoSan

Case Study: Wonderfully Made Women

Wonderfully Made Woman support women predominantly from the African diaspora. Some have traumas relating to their home background or their journey to the UK, some have issues caused by trauma within the UK, some feel isolated and do not know others from their culture, and some are afraid of stigma if they disclose they need help.

In early September, Community Development Worker Fi met with the Director of Wonderfully Made Woman. They already work in Manchester and Bolton, but were keen to open a Hub in Middleton in response to hearing from the community that there was no central space for women to meet and get support with their confidence and self-esteem.

Due to her relationships in the neighbourhood, Fi was able to quickly connect them with the perfect location for their hub. They launched at the Lighthouse Project a few weeks later.

Their women-only space provides a safe and comfortable environment where a woman can ask for support if she needs it, or just relax and enjoy some time with friends. There is a trained host who will be available to speak with privately or if the women wish, they can share any of their stories within the group.

After they established, Fi had further discussions about their policies and other necessary documents for an Organisation Health Check to make sure they are operating safely and effectively.

"I am so glad these women have secured a place where they feel comfortable to come in and seek company of other women going through the same or similar issues."

Case Study: MyColdhurst

MyColdhurst, a community organisation based in Oldham, has been making a significant impact since its inception in 2018. Their mission is multifaceted, encompassing community litter picking, environmental clean-up activities, and support for young people. At the heart of their vision lies a commitment to encourage community empowerment and a genuine love for the place they call home. Action Together's Community Development Worker supported MyColdhurst by:

Securing Funding:

- We helped MyColdhurst write grant applications for funders such as The National Lottery's Community Fund and One Oldham Small Grant
- By crafting compelling applications that showcased their potential and impact, Action Together helped MyColdhurst secure crucial funding
- This funding ensured MyColdhurst had the resources needed to run their programmess effectively and deliver their intended positive outcomes for the community **Developing Policies and Procedures (Quality in Action Award):**
- Action Together collaborated with MyColdhurst to develop clear and comprehensive policies and procedures
- Having these guidelines in place promoted transparency, accountability, and responsible conduct within the organisation **Safeguarding Training:**
- Recognising the importance of child safety, Action Together were asked to provide safeguarding training not just to MyColdhurst's Safeguarding leads, but also to their volunteers
- This training equipped everyone with the knowledge and skills to identify potential risks and report concerns
- By ensuring everyone was trained, Action Together helped foster a safe environment for children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved with MyColdhurst

Action Together's efforts ensured MyColdhurst had the financial resources, operational guidelines, and safety measures in place to deliver its programs and achieve its goals within the community.

"The support and guidance we have received from Jane at Action Together has been nothing short of remarkable! Without her specific help and guidance (and all others at Action Together) we just simply would not be

where we are today. Our partnership working has been in place for over five years and Jane has been at the forefront of all our success. At every situation we encountered a challenge she has been there at the end of a phone call or WhatsApp message giving sound knowledgeable advice, which we have always acted upon. She is a gem in the community for supporting young community groups such as ours in order to make a huge difference in the community. She has attended many of our events and delivered essential training (most outside of work time) and we cannot truly thank her for doing that.

Thanks Jane for all your hard work and patience and understanding!" Sadrul

Alam, Treasurer of MyColdhurst

6. Partnerships and Collaboration

Across our three localities, we hosted 127 separate network meetings and forums, with 1,824 attendees.

We continued to play an active role in the facilitation and development of thematic networks across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

We develop our networks based on the focus and needs of each borough, bringing together voluntary and community organisations, system partners, public sector representatives and local expertise to collaborate and address barriers and challenges in communities of place, identity and experience. Find out more.

Developing our networks

In Tameside, capacity and changes to the team led to us reviewing and relaunching our networks. We engaged our members through surveying and a series of workshops, and fed back our findings to Network members through a report summarising their responses.

On average, the overall satisfaction rate for the networks was 4/5 which suggests that the networks are serving a purpose and groups are benefiting. However, there are some suggestions throughout both the consultation and survey which would suggest that more impact could be achieved.

Beneficial and successful outcomes to the meetings

Overall, the meetings serve as a valuable space for building partnerships and staying informed.
The responses highlight various beneficial aspects of network meetings, including engagement, information sharing, networking opportunities, forming relationships, joint workshops, meeting other organizations, linking up, in-person interaction, access to support services, updates on current situations and challenges, knowledge expansion, collaboration, professional development, access to resources, and maintaining awareness of developments and joint actions.

Issues and shortfalls from the networks

- Attendance issues: some found members of the public sector not attending regularly, potentially impacting the overall effectiveness of the meetings. Some found meetings sometimes have agendas that are perceived as too full, limiting the opportunity for meaningful discussion and organic sharing
- Some sessions feel more like information giving sessions, leaving little room for interactive engagement
- General shortfalls were mentioned including common areas where meetings fall short include lack of clear goals and actions, ineffective communication, insufficient participation or engagement, limited follow-ups and action items, and time management issues
- Some participants found there are limited networking opportunities. There is an overall desirefor more opportunities for networking during meetings, potentially enhancing collaboration and engagement

We have suggested these changes in our redeveloped Tameside networks:

- Through network meetings and forums, we can keep track of the work being achieved. Using our communication channels, we can showcase both the short term and longterm impact the networks have achieved
- At the end of each year there will be a report written for each network to showcase the work that has been achieved in line with the network's objectives, at the end of the financial year
- To ensure that impact is being made, those who attend network meetings to submit any work they have undertaken because of attending those meetings and forums
- At the end of each financial year, we hope to celebrate the work done by Tameside Networks, with a showcasing event to bring everyone together

Rochdale Neighbourhood Networks

In September we relaunched the Prevention Networks in Heywood, Middleton, Rochdale and the Pennines. We asked the question, What have you noticed in your Neighbourhood? which gave a variety of interesting insights.

These spaces will allow us to build relationships between people who care about their neighbourhoods, whether they are in grassroots community groups or frontline workers, so that we can influence local decisions and tackle issues together. Action Together acts as the link between the Networks and emerging neighbourhood governance, with a manager and a Community Development Worker aligned to each of the five newly formed Neighbourhood Meetings.

Following the networks we presented at the Neighbourhood Meetings about the Prevention Networks and how the insight could be used to influence local priorities.

We also published the insight reports to be shared with attendees, stakeholders and to be presented at the Neighbourhood Meetings. We used this opportunity to announce changes to the name of the Networks, rebranding them as Neighbourhood Networks to further forge ties with Neighbourhood Meetings and to broaden the scope of the Networks.

The focus will absolutely still be on prevention, but in its broadest sense including strengthening community power and connection as well as addressing health inequalities.

"It was a great morning, I really felt like there was lots of really good discussion with lots of people I have never met before. So so valuable. Thanks to you and the team for a really good conversation, mapping exercise and chance to network."

Children & Families Locality Lead

Oldham Poverty Truth Commission

The Oldham Poverty Truth Commission brought together the experiences of people who have been in poverty alongside people who work in the council and health services, business, and charities to make deep changes to causes of poverty in Oldham.

Poverty Truth Commissions are a national model pioneered by the Poverty Truth Network. They seek to identify different approaches to addressing poverty through direct experience, relationships, and humanising people as well as systems. Download the full Oldham Poverty Truth Commission Report

Overview of journey

The Poverty Truth Commission was a result of several social justice projects coming together in Oldham. These efforts by community champions, charities like Action Together, as well as Oldham Council and NHS, were starting to look at poverty differently when the COVID pandemic highlighted just how deep and significant inequalities in the borough were.

The resulting project has blossomed into a number of ongoing workstreams, not least the Oldham Poverty Action Network which has been able to draw in more people, more perspectives, and more experiences to maintain the focus on poverty in the borough.

Watch this video produced in collaboration with the NHS Build Back Fairer initiative for an overview of the PTC journey.

More on the stages of the PTC:

1. Drivers
2. Route
3. Destination

Watch our Commissioners' stories

These videos tell the story of the Commission through it's most important component: the people involved. Each one highlights the importance of one of the key themes the Commission identified, why it's relevant to people's experience of poverty, and how it can be applied in different contexts:

- Yaasmin – Points of Contact

- Simon – Stigma and Hope
- Mandy – Places of Belonging
- Lynda – Co-production

Oldham Poverty Action Network

The Oldham Poverty Action Network builds on the existing poverty work of initiatives including the Poverty Action Group, Poverty Truth Commission, OCAN, MoVE, and Cost of Living Crisis Summit. Using an innovative and long-term funding opportunity from Local Motion, we are collaborating across sectors and communities in Oldham to learn how to achieve our vision of: Strengthening community spirit, aligning efforts to tackle poverty, and creating good jobs and social enterprise.

Watch this video to find out more about Local Motion Oldham.

The Network is action driven based on perspectives and insights from key VCFSE, public and private sector organisations and those with lived experience. The actions led by the network will be evidence of best practice, and develop projects which address the root causes of the three themes in the vision. Action Together facilitate and act as a coordinator for the network, however the network is led and owned by the members of the Oldham Poverty Action Network.

Lived experience of poverty and hardship is increasingly recognised as equal to 'learnt' experience of professional and decision makers in addressing it. At the heart of the network will be members with lived experience who will play an active role in everything the Network does.

OPAN consists of Task Groups and a Foundation Group. Tasks Groups focus on Building out from Crisis; and, Hope and Aspirations, creating routes out of poverty.

To support those with lived experience to feel able to play an active part in the network, a separate Peer Support group has been established, creating a space where people can build their confidence, support each other, grow into the space. This is coordinated by a dedicated person who will offer one-to-one support to all the lived experience members, as well as facilitate the peer support group. Learning and development sessions are also provided to those wishing to enhance their skills.

Achievements include:

- Creation of the Oldham Local Motion Longer Term Plan, leading to Local Motion funders investing £2.4million into Oldham over eight years. Action Together is the fiscal host for this money and is recruiting a Programme Manager. The decisions about where and how the money is spent are made through the core group
- Creation of two new roles to build capacity and move the safety net up higher for those in crisis
- Development of Uplift Volunteer Programme: from crisis to hope. The programme is targeted towards those experiencing hardship and focuses on removing barriers which often prevent individuals from taking their first steps into volunteering
- Department for Work and Pensions pilot providing a volunteer pathway targeted at 50+ Universal Credit claimants, focusing on volunteering as a route into employment
- Celebration event to mark one year of OPAN and launch the Poverty Truth Commission report

Violence Reduction Unit

We were the recruitment organisation for the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, recruiting staff members to fill the roles of Violence Reduction Unit Facilitators in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority hosts the Violence Reduction Unit, which seeks to address the underlying causes of violence and work together with communities to prevent it. The role included building relationships with partner organisations in the boroughs that are working in communities to reduce violence in the boroughs.

The community-led approach to violence reduction, means the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) works closely with communities to understand the strengths, challenges, and needs of the community and determine how local investments will be made.

In **Oldham**, the Community-Led Approaches project is a violence reduction pilot funded by the GM Violence Reduction Unit which prioritises investment in community led approaches to tackling violence amongst young people aged 10-25 and their families. The model is to work with communities to identify strengths, challenges and ideas for solution in each area. In Oldham Action Together have been working with the 10GM and the Violence Reduction Unit to support members of 'Develop Glodwick' to form an Alliance to deliver this work.

On Thursday 31 August, Andy Burnham (Mayor of Manchester) and Kate Green (Deputy Mayor of Manchester) visited Oldham to see the progress which the Alliance has been making.

The programme in Oldham provides mentoring, youth work and sports programmes for young people at risk of or vulnerable to serious youth violence and exploitation, programmes that empower young females, and projects that engage young people and their parents.

The alliance came together to share projects they have been working on using VRU funding and how they have been making a positive impact on reducing crime in their area.

The Mayor and Deputy were impressed to hear about all the work which has been taking place!

In **Rochdale**, the focus of the VRU work has been on Darnhill estate in Heywood.

Our aims:

- Ensure that families and communities that are affected by serious violence are effectively supported through our placebased offer.
- Support community and voluntary organisations to deliver activities and interventions in areas of highest need.
- Support an improved criminal justice response to all forms of serious violence.

Judith is our VRU lead for Rochdale, and spent the six months engaging with schools, local people, young people, VCFSE groups, councillors and many more in order to build up a picture of local strengths, challenges and priorities. She is now working her findings into a list of priorities which will be checked with the community.

A grant fund of £100,000 is available in both 2024 and 2025 for local VCFSE groups to collaboratively respond to the needs and challenges of the community, with the aim of these responses being led by groups that are already locally embedded and trusted.

Judith has also shared her findings with Rochdale Borough Council to feed into the development of the Serious Violence Strategy.

In **Tameside**, the Violence Reduction Unit successfully bid for £100,000 investment for the St Peters, Holy Trinity Ward as part of the Community-led Approaches Programme. The Ashton St Peters Youth Alliance will work with Active Tameside, Leap, Lindley Youth Project and PAC to deliver the project for children and young people, offering targeted and universal provision, including detached youth work.

The Alliance will work with a wider multi agency partnership of statutory and voluntary sector organisations including Change Grow Live, Positive Steps, Youth Service, Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind, Complex Safeguarding Team, Kooth, Family Hub, Groundwork, Crime and Community Safety and Youth Justice.

Live Well

Live Well is a GM programme to address inequalities through strengthening community-led approaches to health and wellbeing. For everyone to Live Well – with a good place to live, caring communities and enough to live on – we need systems and approaches to change.

Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside are three of the four 'accelerator localities' to receive funding from the National Lottery, where we will be testing out ways of shifting the relationship between the statutory and VCFSE sector, how we make decisions together and how we measure our success.

In **Rochdale** our ambition is to look at:

- Transformational governance
- Good Help
- Inclusive Messaging
- Shifting our approach to impact

Action Together will be exploring how we can use the Anti-Poverty Strategy to shift power and decision-making, so that communities are working together with those in positions of power. To do this we recruited a Systems Change Facilitator and established an Anti-Poverty Network and Foundation group to sit at the heart of the decision-making process. We were supported by the Innovation Unit in this work, who offer coaching and learning sessions as well as specialist support and helped us develop a Theory of Change for the network.

To start this work we held an event called 'The Future We Deserve: a summit for economic equity – Rochdale' to offer the opportunity for interested organisations to connect and discuss the root causes of poverty, but also the intersectionality of poverty in Rochdale. We also looked at the characteristics and qualities needed for the foundation group and talked what that opportunity would look like.

The event was a real success with over 40 attendees and 14 different organisations hosting conversations around the room.

27 people applied to be on the foundation group, so to ensure we got the right people for the group we conducted 1-2-1 catch ups where we asked questions around the themes of:

availability/commitment, understanding the intersectionality of poverty, enthusiasm to tackle this together in partnership, and being solutions focused.

This allowed us to gain deeper insight into each person and their motivations and allow us to understand if they would be a 'good fit.' For example, one person highlighted their wishes 'to build a new system - and put it back together differently.' Another discussed the idea of 'fixing problems at the source.' These comments showed an understanding that this was about getting to the root of problems, not necessarily just working within existing avenues or providing emergency support.

13 people were selected to be on the Foundation Group through this process. They were selected to provide representation across the borough and cover a range of subjects, expertise and experiences. These include mental health services, youth work, community centres, food solutions, debt solutions, violence against women and girls, homelessness, work and skills, community reporting, lived experience, health and wellbeing of the over 60's community, the asylum seeker experience, and private renting among others.

The recruitment process demonstrated that people had been drawn to the group because of its influence and positioning close to power. One person stated, *'this is a higher level than we've had access to before... it sounds very attractive'.* Another pointed out that this was a great opportunity *'to speak into power'*.

In **Oldham**, we are co-leading the Live Well Accelerator Site work, which is focussed on how funds and resources can be aligned at district neighbourhood level to invest in community-led health approaches? The work planned includes:

- Implementing a neighbourhood-based shared budget for investment and delivery of community-led health and prevention activity at a local level
- Drawing together existing funding and resources from within the system, to be held by a local partnership and distributed via joint partnership investment decisions
- Systems change work around power sharing and involving local community organisations and residents in developing the priorities for funding and the decisions on where funding and resources are invested

We are testing this in the East Oldham District.

The Outcomes and Impact were hoping to achieve includes:

- Increased investment in community-led health and prevention approaches
- Accessible, local activities and support available to residents that have involved residents in the decision making around what is important and what is invested in
- Improved population health and wellbeing
- Reduced demand on the public sector system

In **Tameside**, there are numerous organisations focused around supporting people's health and wellbeing, and making a huge contribution to keeping residents healthy and well. Live Well and the National Lottery Community Fund grant will help systems partners make this the basis of a borough-wide approach to doing more together to maintain good health and prevent ill health for all our residents and find ways to resource this for the longer term.

We plan to bring together system partners, including adult social care, Population Health, housing providers and representatives from the voluntary sector, to understand what prevention looks like. We will identify a pilot site in Tameside, combining the data we hold with externally available data and the insight from these partners and key Community Anchor organisations. Our aims will be to:

- Showcase what is available to support prevention
- Facilitate conversations through the system on where we can work together
- Support the development of a Prevention Framework for this activity and encourage more investment in Tameside

Big Local

In the first quarter of the year, the Big Local Partnership continued to focus on planning for the final year of their plan and the legacy that Big Local will leave behind. Feedback, case studies and the monitoring information were collected from funded groups and activities and work began to prepare an end of plan report highlighting the variety of activities, projects and groups that were supported by Big Local and the impact this had.

We continued to work with Big Local funded organisations to support them with planning to be able to continue to be sustainable once the funding comes to an end, and ensuring the legacy that Big Local will leave behind.

A multi-use games area is due to be built at Arundel Street Park in partnership with Oldham Council, who will provide match funding. The detailed proposal was approved in March 2024 and it is expected that work will be completed over the coming months.

A three-month extension to the current plan had been granted with a monthly review after that – this will enable existing activities to be wound up and the multi-use games area to be completed.

Case Study: Community Explorers

On a regular basis, our Community Development Workers facilitate the Community Explorers Forums in each district.

At one Community Explorers event, Action Together had 29 people attend the early evening Community Explorers gathering, held at Saddleworth Spiritualist Church, Uppermill. Individuals representing themselves, groups, organisations from the VCFSE and public sector attended.

In attendance was a new group, YOU. The aim of YOU is to provide a community group where people can come together to get involved in activities and tasks.

However, by taking part in these tasks, they would like the outcome for people to be focussed on wellbeing and positive mental health, rather than the emphasis being on learning a skill. Instead, they hope the activities are a vehicle for communication with others, building connections and gaining a sense of achievement in collaboration with others while feeling a sense of belonging as part of a group.

Ultimately, they want to help people in the community who may be struggling with aspects of their life by using the skills and life experience they have, practically and therapeutically, to provide a place for people to connect, share, laugh, learn and heal.

Action Together's Community Development Worker and YOU worked together to determine the best legal structure for the group, a Community interest Company (CIC). They were invited to the Community Explorers to make connections. They were able to make some links and were introduced to a couple of other organisations, who had very recently become a CIC or were a CIC. Contacts were exchanged, as they felt they could support and take guidance from each other.

7. Leadership and Advocacy

Stronger Together

In November we hosted our first Stronger Together event, aimed at supporting our member organisations with information, advice, workshops and the chance to speak directly to funders.

Our members also had the opportunity to speak to Action Together's team about the support we can offer their organisation, and hear about the impact we've made in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

We hosted some fantastic speakers and workshops at the event. Thank you to all the speakers and stall holders who joined us on the day:

- The National Lottery shared information about their Community Fund
- Children in Need shared information about their funding
- Alan Lawrie hosted a workshop on Funding your organisations in tough times workshop
- Debra Alcock Tyler was our keynote speaker
- Rene Barrett delivered a masterclass on Keeping Going

"Fabulous event you organised yesterday. The comments I have seen on Twitter suggest the attendees loved it."

"I enjoyed the session. I thought that the organisation of the event was incredibly slick!"

"It was a great event, I really enjoyed it and had some great conversations with groups around applying to the fund."

"Thank you for the invitation to the funders forum this morning, we both really enjoyed it and thought it was great to be able to meet some new groups."

"Excellent event, very much enjoyed the day."

"Meet The Funders was very relevant, with the right number and type of funders. Four of the funders present we were already or were looking to engage with as

part of our fundraising strategy. They were all there in one room which was a pleasant surprise."

See highlights of the event in this video.

Oldham Coliseum

Action Together was asked to complete an independent evaluation of the governance risks that were factors in the closure of the Oldham Coliseum Theatre. This involved interviewing key stakeholders: Oldham Council, Arts Council England, a senior staff member of Oldham Coliseum, the new theatre Project Director, and the Independent Partnership Chair.

Responding to international crises

We recognise that members of the communities Action Together supports have been affected by the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and conflict in Israel and Palestine, as we too have been affected.

We compiled national and international appeals on our website to support people in Gaza.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

This year we recruited a Workforce and Inclusion Coordinator to lead on our internal and external Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work.

This dedicated role has helped us focus on EDI and internal workforce development across Action Together, including creating an EDI strategy and reviewing our current recruitment and EDI policies to recommend changes and improvements.

We've also increased our focus on celebration and awareness days, weeks and months relevant to our members and communities. We've used these celebrations as an opportunity to hear from our members, sharing our platform and the experiences of those who make up the organisations we support across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

We celebrated Black History Month and its 2023 theme 'Saluting Our Sisters' by sharing the personal stories of some women from our membership who are championing their organisations and achieving brilliant things in their communities every day. These women make outstanding contributions, challenging systems and paving the way for change. We wanted to acknowledge and celebrate their leadership and amplify their voices.

Hear from some of our members:

- Patrice Johnson from Tameside-based Finding My Way CIC
- Hayley Harewood from Oldham-based Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS)
- Nicky Iginla from Caring and Sharing Rochdale
- Arike Olwuatosin Sotubo from Tameside-based Ark of Hope

In February, we celebrated LGBT+ History Month by celebrating the amazing achievements and stories of just a few LGBTQ+ members and partners of Action Together:

- David Austin
- Kris Zemlik
- Cllr. Louie Hamblett

We linked into other recognition dates by sharing advice and guidance for our members, such as sharing resources and guidance on making your organisation more inclusive for UK Disability History Month, promoting groups and activities to support International Men's Day, sharing local services, activities and resources for International Women's Day, and actions on developing a trans-inclusive workplace and how we are embedding them at Action Together for International Transgender Day of Visibility.

In March, we hosted our first Iftar , with around 30 staff and community members joining together to share food and learn more about one another's experiences. Nasim Ashraf from the European Islamic Centre gave a presentation on the significance of Ramadan, and attendees discussed their experiences of fasting and the commonalities between our many varied belief systems.

8. Investment

This year we directed over £2,000,000 into the sector, supporting 549 local organisations to get started, develop their ideas, try new projects, and respond to the needs of their communities.

Funding remains the number one focus for our membership. We continued to deliver our fortnightly funding ebulletin, leading to increased engagement and applications both for our own and for external funding, while our Find Funding page remained the most popular on our website with 48,344 visits, a 152% increase on the previous year.

Our Capacity Building teams continued to support groups with bid writing, advice on funds to apply for, and help in demonstrating the impact that funding had made, as well as arranging for funders to speak directly to our members through Meet The Funder.

"It's really good Action Together put on events like this, it gives an opportunity to speak to funders and get to know people!"

Lynn, Infinity Initiatives, about our Meet The Funder event hosting The National Lottery Community Fund

Case Study: Prime Active Communities (PAC) secure £68,000 to continue activities for young people in Tameside

Prime Active Communities CIC is a community interest company that specialises in youth and community engagement. They are based in Hattersley but also work in other areas of Tameside (Hyde, Ashton, Stalybridge).

PAC had lost local authority funding and were looking to widen their funding opportunities in order to continue providing their services which include: detached youth work, Jam Pot Music project (Hattersley and Hurst Cross Ashton), Creative youth group, Podcasting, and general youth work.

Our Community Development Officer met with Mark to establish costs and what would be needed moving forward to enable PAC to continue delivering their services. We provided a grants search, and identified Awards for All and the Million Hours fund.

PAC received £19,000 from Awards for All to continue the Creative Club which is a weekly club for young people living in Hattersley. They also received £49,000 from the Million Hours Fund to deliver detached youth work and youth activity in the area of Ashton. They recently submitted an application to Children in Need to increase their future sustainability.

"Action Together's vital support has been indispensable for Prime Active Communities in accessing crucial funding opportunities, without which our projects benefiting vulnerable young people would be unfeasible. Their assistance in navigating funding sources, introducing us to partner agencies, and providing guidance on writing funding bids has resulted in better outcomes for the youth we serve.

Additionally, their efforts have empowered our staff to enhance their skills and knowledge, ensuring we identify and apply for the most suitable funding opportunities.

Through consistent support, Action Together has enabled us to access opportunities that positively impact our young people and future generations."

Mark Turton, PAC

Case Study: Spoons Neonatal Family Support raise £190 through the Oldham Community Lottery

The Oldham Community Lottery is fantastic fundraising channel, which voluntary and community organisations based in Oldham have been taking advantage of through registering as a 'Good Cause', allowing supporters to give regularly and with ease!

Supporters who sign up to play the Oldham Community Lottery will be given the opportunity to select which registered Good Causes they would like to support, and these organisations will receive proceeds from the ticket sales. One Good Cause is Spoons Neonatal Family Support.

Spoons Neonatal Family Support are an incredible asset to the community, as they aim is to alleviate stress and reduce the isolation of families who experience neonatal care.

Since joining the Oldham Community Lottery in August 2023, Spoons Neonatal Family Support have raised £190! (Figure dated December 2023)

We caught up with Amy Town, Fundraising and Communications at Spoons, to share their experience of the Oldham Community Lottery and how the funds have been used to support them.

"We saw the Oldham Community Lottery as an opportunity to offer our community of supporters another way to help Spoons, and something we'd not tried before. After speaking to a couple of other organisations involved we thought we would trial it as simple way of generating some regular income.

The funds raised have gone towards our services supporting families in Greater Manchester who are experiencing neonatal care. Spoons' team of skilled staff and volunteers help to reduce the stress, isolation and worry felt by families going through neonatal care. Through our advice and information, peer support, resource packs, trauma therapy, support groups, advocacy, community activity groups and much more, Spoons offers the practical and emotional support needed by families experiencing neonatal care.

The registration process is very simple and straightforward.

To organisations thinking about joining, definitely give it a try! It's simple and relatively low resource. It does require promotion via social media and newsletters, but can be successful with an engaged pool of supporters."

Oldham Community Lottery is one example of ways in which we're acting on our Strategic Objective to Grow and Transform as a Local Funder. We continue to work with partners Gatherwell to promote and co-ordinate the Community Lottery and for organisations to register as Good Causes.

Case Study: Seed Funding for Blossom North West CIC

With an interest in combatting food waste and working with communities, Paula wanted to develop an organisation that brought together her lifelong ambition of providing cooking demonstrations and teaching local communities to cook both nutritious and environmentally friendly meals using surplus food.

It can be really challenging to get funding for the initial stages of a new organisation, but through the new Seed Fund Julie from Action Together was able to offer a more hands on process tailored to what they needed.

The £500 funding will help her formally register as a CIC, purchase some start-up equipment and pay for Public Liability insurance, which the group will need to ensure they are operating within Health & Safety guidelines.

Julie will continue to work with Paula throughout this project – and has already suggested some potential links to both the Food Solutions Network, as well as other member organisations who use food and cooking as a method to connect communities and empower individuals.

"The support that I have received from Julie has been amazing from the beginning. Julie's warmth, patience and passion has helped me throughout and I cannot thank her enough for making my dream of Blossom NW be a reality."

Paula, Director of Blossom North West CIC

Case Study: One Oldham Fund Cost of Living Crisis Support Grant funds Christmas Day Celebration for Oldham Chapel

In December, Oldham Chapel held a hugely successful Christmas Day Celebration for more than forty people in their community which was made possible, in part, with funding from our One Oldham Fund Cost of Living Crisis Support Grant.

Rev. Bob Pounder contacted Action Together with a funding application as Oldham Chapel wanted to support the members of their community who they knew were facing isolation, loneliness, or struggling to afford a festive meal. Their project idea aimed to alleviate these issues by providing a Christmas Day Celebration where everyone was welcome, which would counter the issues around social isolation, increase confidence and self-esteem, and provide friendship to the attendees.

The funding application was successful, and Oldham Chapel received £1,000 to ensure that, not only could they provide a Christmas lunch, but Christmas gifts as well. The event was a great success with more than forty local people attending and benefitting from the communityfocused celebration.

Case Study: Crafty Spooners Make an Impact

Crafty Spooners are a social craft group. The group meets every Monday at 10am – 12pm at The Society Rooms in Stalybridge, and group members bring their own craft activities to complete and share with others.

Sue, the organiser of Crafty Spooners, thought that they should carry out a group activity to support local fundraising. The group came up with the idea of making jewellery pieces which could be put together in different creative ways, and make costume jewellery to sell at an open event at Willow Wood Hospice. Crafty Spooners have always worked closely with Willow Wood Hospice, supporting their many fundraising ideas and working with the team to help generate donations. The idea was taken to the fundraising lead at Willow Wood Hospice who said it would be fantastic to have a Crafty Spooners stand at the event.

The group planned to raise funds to purchase the jewellery items that would be made into finished, decorative pieces to sell. Jonathan from Action Together attended a meeting to discuss ideas and advised the activity could be funded by our Seed Fund, where up to £150 was available for groups to test ideas and activities.

All 30 of the Crafty Spooners came together to work on their design ideas, and over six weeks the group turned the £150 investment into 1,000 items to sell at and raise funds for Willow Wood Hospice. Find out more here on our website.

Case Study: Food Solutions Grant "as a way of caring and sharing with one another"

Our Rochdale Communities Fund Food Solutions Grants have been fuelling innovative community projects across the borough to address food insecurity.

One recipient of the funding was Caring and Sharing Rochdale. Their mission is to empower disadvantaged groups and make a positive difference to the lives of the less privileged in their community.

The grant they received has been used to continue their provision setting up a pantry to offer culturally appropriate food to refugees, asylum seekers, and other disadvantaged groups and is a vital lifeline for many in the area.

"The Food Solution Grant has been an active means of lowering hardship in our community, which automatically enhances social cohesion. As an inclusive community, we have been able to maximise our potential of bettering the wellbeing of the people in our community, by provision of healthy cultural appropriate foods, as a way of caring and sharing with one another. Feedback from the people in the various communities we serve has shown that the radiance of your generous support goes beyond the smile, happiness and self-worth of the people, to building a community support system.

Our Food Solution Program supports both low-income earners and unemployed individuals. Thank you greatly Action Together for your continuous support in making a positive impact in our community."

Nicky Iginla, Founder and CEO, Caring and Sharing Rochdale

9. Our strategic objectives

We launched our new five-year strategy in December 2022, to take us from 2023 to 2028.

The strategy will cover all of our core work in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, with these shared strategic priorities:

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities
2. Advance our approach to social change
3. Grow and transform as a local funder

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities

We will do this by:

- Working in neighbourhoods to build deep relationships with groups and strengthen what they do
- Addressing barriers and making Action Together's offer accessible to all parts of our communities of place, identity and experience
- Strengthening community ownership and control of local land, buildings and assets
- Developing and championing volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital **How have we done this in 2023/24?**
- Continued to embed Community Team model across neighbourhoods
- Delivered regular pop-up Volunteering Hubs
- Increased the number of people receiving information about volunteering (eg via Volunteer eBulletin, Volunteering Hubs, ERV, promotion and engagement) and registering to volunteer (+29% on previous year)
- Produced Volunteer Training Videos and delivered pre-volunteering training to improve skills and understanding for those beginning their volunteer journey
- Publicly rolled out Health Checks to all members to support local groups and identify their strengths and areas for improvement

2. Advance our approach to social change

We will do this by:

- Developing our social change networks so they are owned by members with shared learning, power and decision-making
- Investing in networks to identify opportunities for social change, take shared action and make a demonstrable impact in communities
- Developing our skills so that every team across Action Together understands their role in enabling social change
- Strengthening community leadership and the role of community anchors in shaping neighbourhoods

How have we done this in 2023/24?

- See Partnerships and Collaboration section for in depth detail on how we've advanced our approach to social change
- Some highlights:
    - In Oldham, developed and delivered Oldham Poverty Action Network, with investment from LocalMotion
    - In Rochdale, introduced Neighbourhood Networks ○ In Tameside, reviewing and relaunching our networks ○ Connected specific funds with networks and their participants

3. Grow and transform as a local funder

We will do this by:

- Establishing a strategic investment fund in each borough for public and private partners
- Committing to being an open and trusting grantmaker, making longer-term, strategic investments into the core of what our members do
- Connecting and enhancing our development support so we invest time and skills as well as money
- Supporting our members to have a stronger collective voice influencing local funding priorities and bringing investment into their communities **How have we done this in 2023/24?**
- Continued to develop One Oldham Fund and Rochdale Communities Fund
- Introduced new strands to these funds in response to local priorities
- Set up, launched and promoted Oldham Community Lottery
- Hosted in-person Meet The Funders so applicants could meet and speak to national funders directly
- Developed capacity building support offer around intense organisational development support to include business planning, income generation and sustainability

Find our full strategy at this link: Action Together Strategy 2023 - 28

10. Our projects

Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing is a free way to access support for a range of physical, mental and social health needs.

Action Together works in partnership with voluntary organisations, community services, healthcare providers, GPs, local authorities and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership to deliver Social Prescribing in Oldham, and until 31 March 2024 in Tameside.

Through Social Prescribing, we connect people with local services and activities that can help them become healthier, happier and better-connected to their community.

This could involve a Social Prescriber helping people join a social group to meet new people, linking someone with free activities in their area, or connecting someone to a support service for a particular life challenge or health condition.

4,169 people were referred through our Social Prescribing services in Oldham and Tameside last year.

Oldham Social Prescribing is delivered by a consortium of Oldham charities including Age UK Oldham, Positive Steps and Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind, led by Action Together.

We saw another increase in year-on-year take up of the service in Oldham, with a 22% rise in referrals from the previous year and a 37% increase in contacts. Half of all referrals were due to loneliness and social isolation, with 48% also mentioning mental health and emotional wellbeing as a factor. Welfare and money management (29%) and Housing (21%) were also significant reasons for referral.

Once again ONS4 wellbeing scores reflected that the Social Prescribing service has a positive impact for the majority of people who engage with the service. 76% of people reported an improvement in their overall wellbeing following referral to Social Prescribing, with 67% reporting they felt more satisfaction with their life and 65% feeling more worthwhile after working with our Oldham team.

Service users have a variety of ways to engage with Social Prescribing, with 51% of referrals coming from Primary Care or Adult Social Care services. 15% of service users took the opportunity to self-refer into Social Prescribing.

At the start of the year we based a Link Worker in Oldham's Adult Referral Contact Centre (ARCC), to build on the connection with Adult Social Care and more quickly respond to referrals coming through that route. This joint working led to the direct referral of 208 people into Social Prescribing, as well as improving the user journey and better connecting the ARCC team with sources of wider community support.

"Oldham Social Prescribing are a key support service that work alongside ourselves to promote the wellbeing of our residents.

The Social Prescribers that we work with get the most important basics right: compassion, empathy and a person-centred approach to walking hand-in-hand alongside residents with the challenges of daily living that can arise in these difficult times. They are our community experts that support the residents to re-connect with the great resources we have in our community.

As the front door of Adult Social Care, we respond to a range of situations for those residents whose wellbeing may be being impacted. This can range from just a chat and advice, to supporting with urgent care plans. Social Prescribing supports ourselves to promote the holistic wellbeing of residents that we encounter.

Since Oldham Social Prescribing have been as involved as they are with the ARCC, I have seen the difference that is has made in terms of preventative work.

SP service always try their best to get positive outcomes for their service users and they look at other alternatives that may be required.
Having them on the team has improved my own skills and awareness.

Keep up the great work"

Oldham Adult Referral Contact Centre

Case Study: Anne-Marie's Social Prescribing Story

Anne-Marie was referred to our Oldham Social Prescribing team after losing her mum and becoming quite isolated and low in mood. She has learning difficulties and needed support to improve her socialisation and mood.

She met with her Social Prescriber as she needed support with benefits, independent living/housing information, social groups, employment support and education.

Anne-Marie shared a bit about her journey with Oldham Social Prescribing:

"My name's Anne-Marie Jones, I'm 28 years old and I live in Oldham.

I started having problems with my mental health and it got to the point where I couldn't cope anymore. So, I went to the GP and got referred over to Oldham Social Prescribing.

Once I got referred, Debra from Oldham Social Prescribing phoned me up and invited me to have a chat. We've had lots of regular catch ups since then.

I'd been applying for PIP and with the help of the Social Prescribing, I've been able to get it! They've also helped me look into more social groups get and out of the house more.

I get a lot of support though Social Prescribing, and it's nice to have someone to talk to.

Debra has been a great, and such a big help to me.

My hopes for the future are to get myself into a job in retail, or maybe even youth work.

I feel a lot better than I was a few months ago, now I'm getting the right support and help.
For anyone who's been in a similar position to me, I'd say get in touch with your GP. I'm not sure where I'd be without the help of Oldham Social Prescribing."

Social Prescribing has helped Anne-Marie access local groups and activities and education classes. She also regularly visits Oldham Leisure Centre and she now attends multiple sessions at MENCAP in Drama, Dancercise, Music Therapy. She is also participating in English, Maths, Dyslexia classes at Lifelong Learning.

After accessing a referral from her GP, Anne-Marie is in the process of being fully assessed as this is something that she was never able to do. She is now receiving the appropriate benefits.

Anne-Marie has made lots of progress thanks to her commitment and the services she was able to engage with.

In **Tameside**, we were informed in January by NHS Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care Foundation Trust (ICFT) that funding for our Tameside Community Wellbeing Programme would end on 31 March 2024. The programme included Tameside Social Prescribing, meaning we stopped taking referrals from 26 January in order to support those we were already working with and manage the closure of the service for our staff, partners and the people we supported.

The Tameside Social Prescribing service successfully delivered support to over 9,000 people over the six years it was delivered by Action Together, with 94% of our clients reporting improvements in their health and wellbeing after working with the service.

We would like to thank our dedicated team of Social Prescribers and Link Workers, our Community Development Team, our partners and the 796 Tameside groups and services we have worked alongside and connected people to over the years.

We produced this video with a selection of quotes from some of the people we've worked with over the years.

Miles of Smiles

Miles of Smiles is a community transport scheme where volunteer drivers take people to and from health appointments in Tameside. Action Together administers the scheme and recruits volunteer drivers.

69% of our passengers are aged over 76, and our volunteer drivers act as both transport and a support for people who may be suffering from poor health and isolation.

In total this year, Miles of Smiles completed 4,171 journeys, across a total of 38,069 miles.

Healthwatch Oldham

Publication of Healthwatch Oldham's annual report has been delayed by the UK General Election, following the below guidance from Healthwatch England:

The statutory requirement for your annual report is "provision requiring each such report to be prepared by 30th June after the end of the financial year concerned." We therefore recommend that:

- *You prepare and finish your annual report by the 30 June*

- *You do not publish, promote, or send out your annual report until after the general election*
- *We recommend you get in touch with your local authority commissioners ahead of the deadline to inform them of your approach and let them know the annual report publication will be delayed due to the pre-election guidance and when they can expect to receive it from you*

Healthwatch Oldham annual report will be included in this report when available.

Healthwatch Tameside

Healthwatch Tameside's annual report highlights their accomplishments over the past year, which includes the impact they have achieved working with communities, the projects they have undertaken and a look forward to their future priorities.

Highlights from the year include:

- 1,206 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with Healthwatch Tameside, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care
- 234 people came for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis
- Publishing three reports about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services. This included a Mental Health Survey Report which followed up on the 2017 Mental Health Report by assessing the impact of new services
- The support of 11 outstanding volunteers who gave up 90 hours to make care better for our community

Read Healthwatch Tameside's annual report.

"Healthwatch Tameside remains committed to listening to the local community and does so in a variety of ways, including face-to-face engagement events, telephone calls and surveys. All contacts with the Healthwatch Tameside team are recorded and the details of what you tell us are shared (anonymously) with the leaders of our health and social care services to inform their decision making.

Over the course of the past 12 months, Healthwatch Tameside has worked together with the wider Healthwatch in Greater Manchester network to bring the details of your positive comments and concerns together to analyse themes and trends. We have shared this information with the NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care System and told them that our community is unhappy with the changes to services for people with Autism and ADHD. We have also made local leaders aware of your concerns about access to GP appointments and your difficulties in accessing an NHS dentist. It is important that we also feedback on positive experience and whilst you have

told us that you have concern about access to a GP, you have also very often praised the individual GPs and other primary care staff after your contacts with them.

This has been a difficult year for the Healthwatch Tameside team due to uncertainty around the service contract, which was only resolved at the end of March 2024. We are delighted to have been awarded a 6-year contract by the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, and with the support of the Advisory Board and Action Together we have promptly started to develop our plans for the next 3 years.

It has also been a very sad year following the illness of our Deputy Chair, Miss Jyoti Rao, and her passing in February 2024.

I would like to ask each person that reads this report to tell someone else about the work of Healthwatch. If you have completed one of our surveys or spoken to a member of our team, please tell others about us in your community."

Tracey McErlain-Burns. Chair, Healthwatch Tameside

11. Our future plans

Our focus next year will be to:

- Identify ways to deepen the work of our strategic priorities – strengthen social infrastructure, advance our approach to social change and grow and transform as a local funder
- Increase the awareness of the role of the VCSE in economic development and the importance of people and communities being the stewards of local assets and building community wealth
- Increase our offer of support to local social enterprises and local people who want to start a social business but face barriers to access the support they need
- Continue to be a voice alongside people who face inequalities and social injustices, and work to bring people together to create and scale up solutions
- Mitigate the depth of cuts to critical resources that are invested with communities in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and help groups plan for the effects that reduced public finances will have for them

12. Action Together in Greater Manchester

Action Together is one of the founding partners of 10GM, and Action Together's CEO is one of the four Directors. 10GM is a joint venture to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Greater Manchester (GM). We're a collection of local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) operating strategically and collaboratively as an integral part of the wider GM strategy.

The partner organisations that make up 10GM are Action Together https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/, Bolton CVS https://www.boltoncvs.org.uk/, Macc https://www.macc.org.uk/ and Salford CVS https://www.salfordcvs.co.uk/.

10GM is supported by a central team and works closely with Local VCSE Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) in all the boroughs of Greater Manchester. We deliver a wide range of collaborative projects and activities rooted in place through LIOs and connect them at a GM level. As well as our vast collective network of VCSE connections across GM, we have strong relationships with colleagues in the GM Integrated Care Partnership, the GM Combined Authority, and the Mayor's office. We have a longstanding record of collaborative work with GM Moving, including developing local pilots and engagement activities to reach the diverse communities of Greater Manchester.

The Action Together team has been involved directly in the following projects, find out more about all of 10GM's work here

- Action Together employs a Violence Reduction Facilitator in each of the areas we work, who works with local VCFSE partners to develop an alliance and work together to tackle violence that affects young people. The alliance accesses a budget of £100,000 to develop new activities and ways of working in Heywood, Glodwick and Ashton.
- We have been improving our workforce offer to the local sector through resources from the UK Shared Prosperity Funding for infrastructure development, you can find out more about this in our section on Development.
- We provide strategic leadership and representation on a number of GM Boards such as the GM Reform Executive, GM Moving and the GM Population Health Committee. We work together with other GM colleagues on a range of initiatives that strengthens the VCFSE sector and improves working relationships with the GM and locality public sector partners

13. Our purpose and values

Our purpose and charitable objects

'To strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, maximising opportunities to create positive social change, promote social justice and harness social benefit.'

Our charitable objects are to:

- promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government areas of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and the surrounding area and, in particular, to build the capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.

- promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Our mission is to strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, increase individual social action, and work across organisational and sector boundaries to maximise every opportunity to harness social good and create social change. There are an estimated 3,788 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside according to our State of the Sector research.

Public Benefit - how we decide who to help

We make decisions in line with the Public Benefit guidance (2014) and ensure:

- Decisions are taken in line with our charitable objects
- That we adhere to our values in the decision we take
- We prioritise our services to help those that would be unable to pay for the support and / or who are tackling a significant social injustice
- We identify and minimise risks
- There is no personal benefit (or advantage) given to trustees or staff

Our values

Action Together's values underpin all our activities including our strategy, operational plan, workforce development and recruitment. We want to be held to account on our values, as ways of working that we will always strive for.

Believe it's possible - vision and ideas matter. We have confidence in the power of people and communities and strive to release their potential to create the widest possible benefits whilst promoting social justice.

Strengthen others - we work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We achieve this by working collaboratively, sharing skills, and developing relationships between people, groups and agencies.

Be true - we are brave enough to share constructive insight to make progress. Our unique insight comes from our connections with, and amplification of, the diverse range of voices of people and groups that we work with.

14. Structure, Governance and Management

Governance

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Action Together and is ultimately responsible for everything the incorporated charity does. Action Together's board can have a maximum of 14 Board

members, 12 of which are elected from its membership, with the ability to co-opt a further two people.

Action Together's Honorary Officers for 2023/34 are:

- Chair - Camilla Guereca
- Vice Chair - Adrian Ball
- Treasurer - Anne Parkes

A full list of the trustees can be found at http://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-trustees

Board members are supported in their role by receiving an induction and support from the CEO and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to take up our training and development opportunities, as well as external training that is of interest.

Action Together has two standing committees that steer the work of Healthwatch Oldham and Healthwatch Tameside. These have their own terms of reference but ultimate accountability of the contracts and employment is with Action Together.

Structure and management

The day to day running of the charity is handled through a scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive, Liz Windsor-Welsh. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Leadership Team, which consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Operations, and the three Directors responsible for the management of our locality teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Our systems

We constantly strive to refine and improve our internal processes wherever possible to ensure that we employ best practice and have robust controls in place. It is paramount that we remain compliant with legislation and Charity Commission rules and we have internal processes and sub-groups that monitor our activity to ensure that this is the case.

This year we founded an operations network where we meet with operations directors and senior managers from other organisations within our sector. The aim of the network is to share knowledge and learning in relation to internal processes/systems and we work together to refine approaches to challenges that we face. This has proved to be an extremely useful resource and membership of the network is growing.

Our CiviCRM database is currently going through a major update process to further enhance our internal systems and to support the new website platform which will be rolling out later this year.

Our website

We have continued to develop https://www.actiontogether.org.uk to meet the needs of our members.

Our website saw another year-on-year increase in visits, with a total of 783,238 hits. This continues the trend of our website attracting more visitors each year, with an increase of 34,426 (+5%) on the previous year.

Volunteering overtook Find Funding to become our most popular page, with a high proportion of repeat visitors pointing to an engaged local audience and the impact of our new Volunteering outreach and engagement such as monthly Volunteer eBulletin and local Hubs. Our Community Activities Directory also grew in popularity to become the third most visited page, following focused promotion through our communications.

The upcoming move to a new website platform in 2024/25 has given us the opportunity to review our site, its content, navigation, and design. The refresh of our website will make it easier to use and bring additional features/support for our members, such as increased self-service opportunities to manage their accounts in a more accessible way. We sought insights from staff and guidance on accessibility from our Inclusion and Workforce Coordinator, and acquired a free non-profit licence to Hotjar, a website behaviour tool which gives us detailed insights into how users interact with our site, and which will help us in designing the new site. We plan on holding focus groups with our members on the website to gather additional feedback, ahead of the final design and build of the site for launch in 2024.

Our internal development

Our integrated Operational Planning and staff Work Planning system introduced last year was the first step in development of this internal process. This year will see this data collated and used in management information dashboards further improving our knowledge across the organisation and improving governance further.

Following a trial the previous year, we introduced adding bank holidays to staff annual leave allowance, so staff can choose to work bank holidays or book those days off.

We had a team which averaged a headcount of 88.75, and FTE was 77.24

We delivered Chats That Matter coaching training for line managers in October. This training was designed to give line managers the tools to have supportive coaching conversations during supervision and one-to-ones, to ensure they are able to understand their staff's strengths and what motivates them to improve their performance, development and wellbeing.

Our HR team led a strengths mapping project to gain insight into the current skills within the organisation and to inform the learning and development plan for the coming year. The first phase of the surveys was held over March and April , with the second phase due to commence in summer 2024.

The Action Together staff team also had the opportunity to attend anti-racism training from Theatre in Flow, and neurodiversity awareness training from Starling CIO, with additional neurodiversity training also being offered to line managers.

Data protection is an area of great importance and growing complexity and we ensure that our approach in this area is equally prioritized. We remain vigilant at all times and we have successfully renewed our Cyber Essentials accreditation and NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit. Our in-house data protection training is mandatory for all staff and is informed by our knowledge of incidents and near misses in VCFSE organisations over the previous year. Our Data Protection Officer

represents the VCFSE Sector on the Greater Manchester Information Board and is an active participant in a number of relevant Information Governance initiatives in the City Region.

Ensuring the Health and Safety of our employees, volunteers and members of the community with whom we interact is of paramount importance to us. We have recently undergone a complete review of our Health and Safety policies and practices aided by a specialist consultant in this area who also acts as our registered "competent person" in Health and Safety matters. This saw the updating and introduction of some new Risk Assessment templates as well as a new Health and Safety manual and updated policy. Health and Safety training is mandatory for our employees and is maintained on a regular basis. It also forms part of our onboarding process shortly after recruitment of any new employee.

Risk management

We hold a detailed risk management document which is submitted to the Board of trustees of an annual basis. This risk register identifies potential risks to the organisation over a broad base of elements covering, governance, strategic, reputational, operational, safeguarding, financial and information governance. In addition it sets out mitigations and controls that are in place to reduce the risk of such incidents as far possible. Where incidents do occur, each is logged and any subsequent learning reflected in a change to process and practice where appropriate. In addition to the risk register and incident log, a compliance report details controls in place over our internal systems and this is submitted to the Board of trustees on an annual basis.

15. Financial review

Funds at 31 March 2024 amounted to £5,015,867of which £3,638,604 were restricted. Expenditure in the year met the objectives that were required by the principal funding sources, as described in their funding agreements.

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The Trustees have established a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that Action Together has the ability to meet its ongoing commitments with sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of six month's running costs, redundancy costs and core committed costs
- A proportion of reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form
- The calculation of the reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle and will take into account:
- Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
- Planned activity level

- Organisation's commitments
- The reserves fund is managed and monitored at each Finance Sub-Group meeting and reported back to the full Board of Trustees within the financial reporting procedures.

The calculated reserves fund will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it takes account of changing circumstances.

The reserves position as at 31 March 2024 is as follows:

Total requirement of six months running costs, redundancy and committed core costs: £692,250

Total unrestricted reserves, cash and investments (net of tangible fixed assets): £1,359,025

The trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity, projections, cash flows and reserves and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

16. Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name: Action Together CIO

Charity registration number: 1165512

Principal office:

80 Union Street

Oldham

OL1 1DJ

Trustees:

- N. Akhter
- A. Ball
- A. Begum
- C. Guereca
- J. Mellor
- A. Parkes
- J. Rehman
- A. Wiggans
- J. Yates
- M. Patel

Auditor:

Feltons Chartered Accountants

1 The Green

Richmond

Surrey

TW9 1PL

Bankers:

Unity Trust Bank PLC

9 Brindley Place

Birmingham

B1 2HP

CCLA Investment Management

Senator House

85 Queen Victoria Street

London

EC4V 4ET

Blackrock Investment Management (UK) Ltd

12 Throgmorton Avenue

London

EC2N 2DL

Castlefield

9th Floor

111 Piccadilly

Manchester

M1 2HY

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity, and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP
- Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved by Camilla Guereca on behalf of the board of trustees on: 5th September 2024.



Chair Action Together CIO

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Action Together CIO (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements through discussion with management and those charged with governance, including financial reporting and taxation legislation. We considered that extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of noncompliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit

.- We addressed the risk of fraud through management override by reviewing the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making key accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business that we come across throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO (CONTINUED)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Feltons Chartered Accountants

Chartered Accountants
& Statutory Auditors

1 The Green

London

TW9 1PL

Date: 19/09/2024

Feltons Chartered Accountants are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Income from:					
Charitable activities	4	**-**	**6,190,669**	**6,190,669**	*6,410,244*
Other trading activities	5	**45,006**	**-**	**45,006**	*69,522*
Investments	6	**96,949**	**28,583**	**125,532**	*41,374*
Total income		**141,955**	**6,219,252**	**6,361,207**	*6,521,140*
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7,8	**19,788**	**910**	**20,698**	*26,669*
Charitable activities	10	**62,712**	**6,160,937**	**6,223,649**	*6,379,212*
Total expenditure		**82,500**	**6,161,847**	**6,244,347**	*6,405,881*
Net income before net gains on investments		**59,455**	**57,405**	**116,860**	*115,259*
Net gains on investments		**1,039**	**6,992**	**8,031**	*31,679*
Net movement in funds		**60,494**	**64,397**	**124,891**	*146,938*
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**1,316,769**	**3,574,207**	**4,890,976**	*4,744,038*
Net movement in funds		**60,494**	**64,397**	**124,891**	*146,938*
Total funds carried forward		**1,377,263**	**3,638,604**	**5,015,867**	*4,890,976*

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 66 to 88 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Note		2024 £		*2023* *£*
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		**18,238**		*22,130*
Investments	16		**1,056,300**		*1,206,253*
			1,074,538		*1,228,383*
Current assets					
Debtors	17	**158,870**		*200,481*	
Investments	18	**907,595**		*865,519*	
Cash at bank and in hand		**3,093,096**		*2,782,808*	
		4,159,561		*3,848,808*	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	**(218,232)**		*(186,215)*	
Net current assets			**3,941,329**		*3,662,593*
Total assets less current liabilities			**5,015,867**		*4,890,976*
Net assets excluding pension asset			**5,015,867**		*4,890,976*
Total net assets			**5,015,867**		*4,890,976*
Charity funds					
Restricted funds	20		**3,638,604**		*3,574,207*
Unrestricted funds	20		**1,377,263**		*1,316,769*
Total funds			**5,015,867**		*4,890,976*

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 9th September 2024 and signed on their behalf by: Anne Parkes (Treasurer)



The notes on pages 66 to 88 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	2024 £	*2023* *£*
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	**58,313**	*194,629*
Cash flows from investing activities		
Dividends, interests and rents from investments	**104,308**	*41,374*
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets	**-**	*265,000*
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(10,317)**	*(14,297)*
Proceeds from sale of investments	**164,885**	*84,402*
Purchase of investments	**(6,901)**	*(5,222)*
Net cash provided by investing activities	**251,975**	**371,257**
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash provided by financing activities	**-**	**-**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**310,288**	**565,886**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	**2,782,808**	*2,216,922*
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	**3,093,096**	*2,782,808*

The notes on pages 66 to 88 form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is 80 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DJ.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS 102) published in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Action Together CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

2.2 Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

2.3 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it will be regarded as restricted.

Receipts received during the year which are not to be expended until after the balance sheet date are not recognised as income for the year and are included in income deferred.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the Charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.5 Government grants

Government grants relating to tangible fixed assets are treated as deferred income and released to the Statement of Financial Activities over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned. Other grants are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities as the related expenditure is incurred.

2.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the revaluation model, tangible fixed assets whose fair value can be measured reliably shall be carried at a revalued amount, being their fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Revaluations are made with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount does not differ materially from that which would be determined using fair value at the end of the reporting date.

Fair values are determined from market-based evidence by appraisal that is normally undertaken by professionally qualified valuers. If there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialised nature of the tangible fixed asset and it is rarely sold, except as part of a contributing business, a Charity may need to estimate fair value using an income or depreciated replacement cost approach.

Gains and losses on revaluation are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities, with a separate revaluation reserve being shown in the Statement of funds note.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Motor vehicles	-	25% straight line
Fixtures and fittings	-	25% straight line
Office equipment	-	25% straight line

2.8 Investments

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance Sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as ‘Gains/(Losses) on investments’ in the Statement of Financial Activities.

2.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

2.11 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

2.12 Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Where investments in shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in income and expenditure. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised under the appropriate heading in the statement of financial activities in which the initial gain was recognised.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.13 Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charity to the fund in respect of the year.

2.14 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(i) Recoverability of receivables

If necessary, the Charity establishes a provision for receivables that are estimated not to be recoverable. When assessing the recoverability the trustees consider factors such as aging of receivables, past experience of recoverability, and the credit profile of an individual or groups of customers.

Critical areas of judgment:

(i) Assessing indicators of impairment

In assessing whether there have been any indicators of impairment of assets, the trustees have considered both external and internal sources of information such as market conditions, counterparty credit ratings and experience of recoverability. There have been no indicators of impairment identified during the current financial year.

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Core Infrastructure	814,232	**814,232**	*1,141,251*
Healthwatch	285,550	**285,550**	*295,276*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	2,045,889	**2,045,889**	*2,890,912*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,689,308	**1,689,308**	*1,412,084*
LTO	114,561	**114,561**	*253,457*
Other projects & consultancy	1,241,129	**1,241,129**	*417,264*
	6,190,669	**6,190,669**	*6,410,244*
Total 2023	*6,410,244*	*6,410,244*	

5. Income from other trading activities

Income from fundraising events

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Activities for generating funds	45,006	**45,006**	*69,522*
Total 2023	*69,522*	*69,522*	

6. Investment income and bank interest

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Income from listed investments	6,218	28,583	**34,801**	*11,320*
Investment income - bank interest	90,731	-	**90,731**	*30,054*
	96,949	28,583	**125,532**	*41,374*
Total 2023	*34,473*	*6,901*	*41,374*	

7. Expenditure on raising funds

Support costs - fundraising expenses

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Centrally incurred support costs less those recovered from restricted funds	19,788	**19,788**	*25,594*
Total 2023	*25,594*	*25,594*	

The centrally incurred support costs amounted to £752,238 (2023: £637,247) of which £732,450 (2023: £611,653) were recovered from the administration and management of restricted costs.

8. Investment management costs

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Investment management fees	910	**910**	*1,075*
Total 2023	*1,075*	*1,075*	

9. Analysis of grants

	Grants to Institutions 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Grants, Grants & investments in the VCFSE	1,515,286	**1,515,286**	*1,798,710*
Grants, Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	-	**-**	*242,422*
Grants, Other projects & consultancy	72,069	**72,069**	-
	1,587,355	**1,587,355**	*2,041,132*
Total 2023	*2,041,132*	*2,041,132*	

Information relating to grants made to institutions by the Charity can be accessed at https:www.actiontogether.org.uk.

10. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund type

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	*Total 2023 £*
Core Infrastructure	-	752,419	**752,419**	*800,490*
Healthwatch	-	294,284	**294,284**	*299,406*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	-	1,625,144	**1,625,144**	*3,242,051*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	-	1,866,772	**1,866,772**	*1,520,975*
LTO	-	129,799	**129,799**	*226,063*
Other projects & consultancy	47,933	1,492,519	**1,540,452**	*282,560*
Governance costs	14,779	-	**14,779**	*7,667*
	62,712	6,160,937	**6,223,649**	*6,379,212*
Total 2023	*23,676*	*6,355,536*	*6,379,212*	

11. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Grant funding of activities 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	*Total funds 2023 £*
Core Infrastructure	610,099	-	142,320	**752,419**	*800,490*
Healthwatch	232,284	-	62,000	**294,284**	*299,406*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	49,911	1,515,286	59,947	**1,625,144**	*3,242,051*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,665,356	-	201,416	**1,866,772**	*1,520,975*
LTO	125,399	-	4,400	**129,799**	*226,063*
Other projects & consultancy	1,209,429	72,069	258,954	**1,540,452**	*282,560*
Governance costs	-	-	14,779	**14,779**	*7,667*
	3,892,478	1,587,355	743,816	**6,223,649**	*6,379,212*
Total 2023	*3,718,760*	*2,041,132*	*619,320*	*6,379,212*	

12. Auditors' remuneration

The auditors' remuneration amounts to an auditor fee of £8,667 *(2023 - £6,279)*, and accountancy fees of £4,000 (*2023 - £3,500*).

13. Staff costs

	2024 £	*2023 £*
Wages and salaries	**2,665,904**	*2,281,490*
Social security costs	**254,492**	*218,084*
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	**154,975**	*128,030*
	3,075,371	*2,627,604*

13. Staff costs (continued)

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2024 No.	*2023* *No.*
Total employees	**89**	*81*

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2024 No.	*2023* *No.*
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	**1**	*-*
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	**1**	*1*

Key management personnel include all persons that have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. The total compensation paid to key management personnel for services provided to the charity including employer's national insurance was £157,638 (2023:£152,530).

14. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits *(2023 - £NIL)*.

During the year ended 31 March 2024, expenses totalling £NIL were reimbursed or paid directly to Trustee *(2023 - £6 to 1 Trustee)* for meeting expenses.

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor vehicles £	Fixtures and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2023	**24,299**	**9,000**	**51,936**	**85,235**
Additions	**-**	**872**	**9,445**	**10,317**
At 31 March 2024	**24,299**	**9,872**	**61,381**	**95,552**
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	**24,299**	**7,497**	**31,309**	**63,105**
Charge for the year	**-**	**1,604**	**12,605**	**14,209**
At 31 March 2024	**24,299**	**9,101**	**43,914**	**77,314**
Net book value				
At 31 March 2024	**-**	**771**	**17,467**	**18,238**
At 31 March 2023	*-*	*1,503*	*20,627*	*22,130*

16. Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £	Unlisted investments £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2023	**1,187,467**	**18,786**	**1,206,253**
Additions	**6,901**	**-**	**6,901**
Disposals	**(163,034)**	**(1,315)**	**(164,349)**
Revaluations	**7,495**	**-**	**7,495**
At 31 March 2024	**1,038,829**	**17,471**	**1,056,300**
Net book value			
At 31 March 2024	**1,038,829**	**17,471**	**1,056,300**
At 31 March 2023	*1,187,467*	*18,786*	*1,206,253*

17. Debtors

	2024 £	*2023 £*
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	**135,840**	*175,606*
Other debtors	**3,336**	*3,267*
Prepayments and accrued income	**19,694**	*21,608*
	158,870	*200,481*

18. Current asset investments

	2024 £	*2023 £*
Unlisted investments	**907,595**	*865,519*

Unlisted investments represents investment in a charity short term common deposit fund. It is considered that the amounts should be shown as current asset investments rather than cash and the amount for the prior year of £865,519 has been reanalysed accordingly.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

19. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	*2023* *£*
Trade creditors	**15,778**	*19,631*
Other taxation and social security	**123,092**	*89,036*
Other creditors	**1,240**	*1,114*
Accruals and deferred income	**78,122**	*62,562*
Grants accrued - institutional	**-**	*13,872*
	218,232	*186,215*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

20. Statement of funds

The separate analysis of restricted funds overleaf shows the movements on the material restricted funds, with the balance of the funds shown as other restricted funds.

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
Development of the database	**68,018**	**-**	**(21,013)**	**-**	**-**	**47,005**
Research and capacity fund	**-**	**-**	**-**	**47,000**	**-**	**47,000**
	68,018	**-**	**(21,013)**	**47,000**	**-**	**94,005**
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	**1,248,751**	**141,955**	**(61,487)**	**(47,000)**	**1,039**	**1,283,258**
Total Unrestricted funds	**1,316,769**	**141,955**	**(82,500)**	**-**	**1,039**	**1,377,263**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds						
Action Oldham Fund	**535,229**	**19,420**	**(120,224)**	**-**	**10,524**	**444,949**
Tameside 4 Good	**289,339**	**10,389**	**(13,200)**	**-**	**(3,532)**	**282,996**
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	**152,280**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**152,280**
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	**141,873**	**619,790**	**(449,060)**	**-**	**-**	**312,603**
One Oldham Fund	**19,609**	**301,100**	**(121,277)**	**-**	**-**	**199,432**
Restricted Funds - other	**2,435,877**	**5,268,553**	**(5,458,086)**	**-**	**-**	**2,246,344**
	3,574,207	**6,219,252**	**(6,161,847)**	**-**	**6,992**	**3,638,604**
Total of funds	**4,890,976**	**6,361,207**	**(6,244,347)**	**-**	**8,031**	**5,015,867**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2023* £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Designated Funds -Development of the database	*90,487*	*-*	*(22,469)*	*-*	*68,018*
General funds					
General Funds - all funds	*1,081,274*	*103,995*	*(26,801)*	*90,283*	*1,248,751*
Total Unrestricted funds	*1,171,761*	*103,995*	*(49,270)*	*90,283*	*1,316,769*

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2023* £
Restricted funds					
Action Oldham Fund	*605,716*	*20,616*	*(54,797)*	*(36,306)*	*535,229*
Community Wellbeing	*313,507*	*875,697*	*(791,618)*	*-*	*397,586*
Tameside 4 Good	*305,201*	*10,235*	*(3,799)*	*(22,298)*	*289,339*
Oldham Local Motion	*350,000*	*1,199*	*(74,525)*	*-*	*276,674*
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	*157,113*	*-*	*(4,833)*	*-*	*152,280*
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	*137,174*	*413,423*	*(408,724)*	*-*	*141,873*
Rochdale RRR Fund	*274,986*	*-*	*(256,758)*	*-*	*18,228*
Restricted Funds - other	*1,428,580*	*5,095,975*	*(4,761,557)*	*-*	*1,762,998*
	3,572,277	*6,417,145*	*(6,356,611)*	*(58,604)*	*3,574,207*
Total of funds	*4,744,038*	*6,521,140*	*(6,405,881)*	*31,679*	*4,890,976*

21. Summary of funds

Summary of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Designated funds	**68,018**	**-**	**(21,013)**	**47,000**	**-**	**94,005**
General funds	**1,248,751**	**141,955**	**(61,487)**	**(47,000)**	**1,039**	**1,283,258**
Restricted funds	**3,574,207**	**6,219,252**	**(6,161,847)**	**-**	**6,992**	**3,638,604**
	4,890,976	**6,361,207**	**(6,244,347)**	**-**	**8,031**	**5,015,867**

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

A balance in designated funds exists for the development of our database system and cost of the relaunch of our website later in 2024. In addition a further £47,000 has been designated from reserves to be spent on state of the sector research and report along with costs associated with Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation.

21. Summary of funds (continued)

Summary of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2023* £
Designated funds	*90,487*	*-*	*(22,469)*	*-*	*68,018*
General funds	*1,081,274*	*103,995*	*(26,801)*	*90,283*	*1,248,751*
Restricted funds	*3,572,277*	*6,417,145*	*(6,356,611)*	*(58,604)*	*3,574,207*
	4,744,038	*6,521,140*	*(6,405,881)*	*31,679*	*4,890,976*

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	18,238	-	**18,238**
Fixed asset investments	329,923	726,377	**1,056,300**
Current assets	1,247,334	2,912,227	**4,159,561**
Creditors due within one year	(218,232)	-	**(218,232)**
Total	1,377,263	3,638,604	**5,015,867**

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	*Restricted funds 2023 £*	*Total funds 2023 £*
Tangible fixed assets	*22,130*	-	*22,130*
Fixed asset investments	*329,537*	*876,716*	*1,206,253*
Current assets	*1,151,317*	*2,697,491*	*3,848,808*
Creditors due within one year	*(186,215)*	-	*(186,215)*
Total	*1,316,769*	*3,574,207*	*4,890,976*

23. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	*2023* *£*
Net income for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	**124,891**	*146,938*
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**14,209**	*13,343*
Gains/(losses) on investments	**(8,031)**	*83,321*
Loss/(profit) on the sale of fixed assets	**-**	*(115,000)*
Decrease in debtors	**41,611**	*89,463*
Increase in creditors	**32,017**	*33,016*
Other interest receivable	**(104,308)**	*(41,374)*
Increase in current asset investments	**(42,076)**	*(15,078)*
Net cash provided by operating activities	**58,313**	*194,629*

24. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	*2023* *£*
Cash in hand	**3,093,096**	*2,782,808*
Total cash and cash equivalents	**3,093,096**	*2,782,808*

25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 March 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	**2,782,808**	**310,288**	**3,093,096**
Liquid investments	**865,519**	**42,076**	**907,595**
	3,648,327	**352,364**	**4,000,691**

26. Pension commitments

The group operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the group in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the group to the fund and amounted to £154,975 (2023 - £128,030). contributions totalling £Nil (2023: £Nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date and are included in creditors.

27. Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions.

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

England & Wales - Charity number 1165512

Accounts

Charity number: 1165512

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

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Action Together

2022 / 2023

Annual Report

Highlights of our impact in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

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1. Introduction from our Chair

Welcome to Action Together's annual report for the financial year ending 31 March 2023.

Once again, I am proud to share the work of our charity with you. You will see highlights in this report of how we have engaged people to help others, supported local groups to develop and grow, brought organisations together across sectors, funded brilliant projects and activities, and helped people turn their community ideas into action. All of this is done with the aim of creating stronger communities.

Unfortunately, our communities have been hit by the Cost of Living Crisis. Coming so quickly after the pandemic and to an already fragile sector, this has been a challenge to us all. You will see the impact of the crisis throughout the report, and how we have supported the sector to respond. The people and organisations who make up our sector always do respond, standing up and supporting the communities that need them, and it is essential that, in turn, they are supported and given the tools and resources they need. Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside are stronger with a thriving voluntary and community sector.

I want to thank all the volunteers and voluntary organisations in our boroughs for their amazing work, passion, ideas and strength. It is incredible to see the breadth of life-changing work taking place in our communities.

I also want to thank the staff team at Action Together, who delivered the work you will read about in this report. Their commitment, knowledge and skills make everything we do possible. You will see just some of the work of our teams, but it would take many more reports to cover everything they do and all the people they support. I hope you can take pride in your work featured in this report, and in all that you do that we haven't managed to include.

Finally, thank you to the Board of Action Together who give their time and skills to govern the charity. They are also volunteers, and people who are deeply passionate about the places they live and the people who make up our communities.

I was proud to launch our new strategy this year. It will steer us through the next five years, guiding our work in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside with these shared strategic priorities:

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities
2. Advance our approach to social change
3. Grow and transform as a local funder

You will see sections of this report dedicated to the ways we are already delivering against these objectives, with pioneering new work building on our established services.

I hope you enjoy reading this report, and if it prompts you to take action, please get in touch with us.

Camilla Guereca, Chair, Action Together

2. Who we are and what we do

Action Together is the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside.

We connect people with what's happening in their community, develop community ideas into action, strengthen local organisations, and provide strategic influence for the charity and voluntary sector. Membership of Action Together is free and open to any voluntary organisation, charity or social enterprise in Oldham, Rochdale, or Tameside.

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies, and roles.

We provide support for voluntary, community and charity organisations to establish and develop, including specialist information, advice, and training for staff, volunteers and trustees.

Action Together works in partnership with other charities, infrastructure organisations and public bodies and collaborates on key thematic work. We also promote and advocate for the work of organisations locally, and across Greater Manchester and the wider area.

We invest in the sector, and members can apply for funding from our grants programmes. We also provide support for groups seeking and applying for investment, and direct members to appropriate sources of funding.

3. Our Year in Numbers

- 1,229 people registered to volunteer through Action Together
- We provided 1,695 organisations with 1-2-1 support, advice and mentoring
- We hosted 188 training sessions and events
- 2,310 people attended our training and events
- 1,333 people took part in our partnership and thematic networks
- We secured and invested £2,526,834 into the sector
- 819 local organisations benefitted from funding we provided
- 4,936 people were referred through our Social Prescribing services

4. Our new strategic objectives

We launched our new five-year strategy in December 2022, to take us from 2023 to 2028.

The strategy will cover our work in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, with these shared strategic priorities:

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities
2. Advance our approach to social change
3. Grow and transform as a local funder

1. Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities

We will do this by:

- Working in neighbourhoods to build deep relationships with groups and strengthen what they do
- Addressing barriers and making Action Together's offer accessible to all parts of our communities of place, identity and experience
- Strengthening community ownership and control of local land, buildings and assets
- Developing and championing volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital

How will we know we've succeeded?

- Annual membership feedback shows a deepening of our relationship with groups that helps them create change
- The economic difference the sector makes is better understood and wealth-building approaches are more widespread
- More people volunteering from all parts of our community

2. Advance our approach to social change

We will do this by:

- Developing our social change networks so they are owned by members with shared learning, power and decision-making
- Investing in networks to identify opportunities for social change, take shared action and make a demonstrable impact in communities
- Developing our skills so that every team across Action Together understands their role in enabling social change
- Strengthening community leadership and the role of community anchors in shaping neighbourhoods

How will we know we've succeeded?

- We can tell powerful impact stories about collective action addressing root causes that has led to real change
- We have developed successful new practices and investment models that increase trust and collaboration
- More sector leaders feel supported and believe they can affect change

3. Grow and transform as a local funder

We will do this by:

- Establishing a strategic investment fund in each borough for public and private partners

- Committing to being an open and trusting grantmaker, making longer-term, strategic investments into the core of what our members do
- Connecting and enhancing our development support so we invest time and skills as well as money
- Supporting our members to have a stronger collective voice influencing local funding priorities and bringing investment into their communities

How will we know we've succeeded?

- There is a recognised way for partners to invest in each borough, creating more strategic and collective decision making
- Amazing impact stories are made possible by getting money to the right organisations and working with them to achieve their aims

Throughout this report you'll see examples of how we're turning our objectives into action across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Find our full strategy at this link: Action Together Strategy 2023 - 28

5. Our year in Volunteering

The Cost of Living Crisis had an impact on the kinds of volunteering roles we developed or worked in partnership to fulfil. We worked with volunteers from local businesses Wilmott Dixon and BizSpace, New Pioneers, local Councillors and Action Together to produce Winter Warmer packs for distribution to people across Rochdale Borough as part of Rochdale's Warm Spaces Programme. In Oldham, we developed new volunteering roles to support the delivery of the Borough's Warm Bank initiative, as part of our wider work in responding to the Cost of Living Crisis.

Place-based volunteering

Volunteering is a key part of our objective to strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities.

We want to:

- Work in neighbourhoods to build deep relationships with groups and strengthen what they do
- Address barriers and make Action Together's offer accessible to all parts of our communities of place, identity and experience
- Develop and champion volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital

We launched our Community Team model in the previous year, embedding our teams in neighbourhoods and taking Action Together's offer into community venues and spaces.

Having established a weekly presence, we developed the model with the addition of Volunteer Hubs. Our Volunteering teams in Oldham and Tameside are based in the heart of communities, with extensive knowledge of local roles that might suit volunteers. By working closely with our Development and Social Prescribing teams, we can connect potential volunteers with roles that suit them at organisations in their local area – helping connect communities, strengthen people's connection to their neighbourhood, and create local social action. Our teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside can meet people in a place that's convenient to them, and as we work across the three boroughs, if a volunteer is looking for a specific role we can also connect them with a relevant opportunity that might not be in their area.

Employer Supported Volunteering

We launched a campaign in January to promote Employer Supported Volunteering.

Employer supported volunteering, or corporate volunteering, is where the employees of an organisation take time to volunteer during work hours or organise volunteer activities. Employees might choose to support a charity or community group, or take up an opportunity provided by their workplace.

We promoted the benefits of volunteering for businesses, and the types of roles they can get involved in. We also held an online training session with our member organisations to share ways they might appeal to and engage with local businesses, which has been viewed 1,193 times on our YouTube channel.

We want to empower more local people to volunteer from all parts of our communities. As businesses look to prioritise their corporate social responsibility and create positive impact and links to the communities in which they're based, we'll continue to promote our brokerage service and offer more ways to connect workplaces with local voluntary organisations.

"I'm getting to meet all these great colleagues I wouldn't have necessarily known before and I know I'm helping out a very, very valued cause."

One of nine Timberland UK volunteers we connected with a community allotment volunteering day

"It's a fantastic opportunity for people like me who are office based."

One of 70 British Gas volunteers who volunteered at The Bread and Butter Project over the course of two months

"We really want to encourage other businesses to get involved!"

One of 40 Findel Education and Irwell Homes volunteers who helped Corrie Primary School create a community space

Volunteers' Week

Volunteers' Week is a time to say thanks, so in June we used the week to say a big thank you to the volunteers and voluntary organisations that help create stronger communities in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

We used the week to launch our annual Volunteer Celebration Fund. We wanted to support local groups in saying thanks to their volunteers, so provided grants of up to £500 for events and activities that create opportunities to come together, involve, and celebrate volunteers for the fantastic contribution they make.

"We usually celebrate just two to three volunteers each year but with this funding we were able to dedicate a segment of our Awards Evening to the importance of volunteers and award every single volunteer, regardless of how much contribution they made. The funding put a smile on 18 people's faces and we have no doubt that they will continue to volunteer. Since the event we have had more young people and adults approach us for volunteering opportunities. We were able to make every single volunteer feel special."

Moinul Islam, Outta Skool. Action Together's Volunteer Celebration Fund supported their Awards Evening

"The volunteers support such a range of areas at Dr Kershaw's and this was my first opportunity to meet with other volunteers - it was amazing to see so many people having such a lovely time. Everyone I met and had opportunity to talk with thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the event."

Dr Kershaw's Hospice Volunteer. Action Together's Volunteer Celebration Fund supported their Volunteer Celebration Evening

We also spoke to volunteers and local voluntary organisations about why they volunteer, and the difference volunteering makes. Watch here.

Volunteer Voices

"I wanted to reach out and help in my neighbourhood. I received an email from Action Together about different volunteering roles, and doorstep donation food bank collections caught my eye. It has been the perfect way for us to help out.

"It's given us great pleasure knowing we are helping others.

"We have established good relationships with our neighbours, who donate every month. They even bring their donations straight to me if they are going to be away."

Sumi and Ram Nathoo, Doorstep Donation Volunteers

We met 'D' at an event in Rochdale. He was looking to make a positive change in his life, as well as gain experience to help with a sport qualification at college. Through our local knowledge and connections we helped enlist D on a community Sports Leader course, and matched him with a volunteer role helping people with disabilities engage with and enjoy sport.

"Thank you for changing my life! I really feel I am making a difference to others now."

'C' had been feeling isolated throughout the pandemic, and was introduced to Action Together by an organisation we work closely with. We met C and discussed their interests, experience and what they'd like to get involved with. They are now actively volunteering, and in their first week gave a fantastic 14 hours volunteering.

"I am truly impressed with how inclusive the team is through engaging with volunteers, supporting them and promoting volunteer opportunities. The impact the Volunteer Centre makes to people's lives is truly inspirational."

Sarinah, Action Together volunteer

"I needed to give something back and this is an ideal way to do it."

Geoff, Foodbank Volunteer

"For children living in poverty, receiving a gift will mean so much, and give them a little bit of Christmas joy in tough times. I'd like to take a moment to thank the extraordinary Tameside Toy Appeal volunteers and staff who make this annual initiative such a success."

Andrew Gwynne, MP for Denton and Reddish

Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation

Towards the end of the year we applied for a renewal of our Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

The Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) is the quality mark for organisations delivering Volunteer Centre functions. It provides assurance to members of the public seeking volunteering opportunities, volunteer involving organisations, partner, commissioner and funding organisations, that the holder provides a high quality and effective local service.

Accreditation takes place via a peer assessment and is valid for three years. It covers the Five Functions of a Volunteer Centre's work:

- Strategic Development of Volunteering
- Good Practice Development
- Developing Volunteering Opportunities
- Voice of Volunteering
- Brokerage

Action Together has been an accredited Volunteer Centre for a number of years in Oldham and Tameside. Our close engagement with volunteers and volunteer organisations have helped Action Together be recognised as the place to go if you want to get into volunteering, or want to recruit volunteers in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Place-Based Volunteering

Our model of place-based working means our teams in Oldham and Tameside, including our volunteering service, are embedded in neighbourhoods working alongside communities and have established relationships with grass-root organisations, community leaders, local networks, and system partners. This has given us invaluable insight into the ways in which people choose to give their time as well as developing a deeper understanding of the support needs of our members, for example creating opportunities that are hyper-local, task-based and more flexible.

Our experienced volunteer officers are available to meet with individuals in neighbourhoods. They combine 1-1 support with up-to-date local knowledge, in an informal, supportive settings using a tried and tested strength-based approach.

We are well placed to understand and respond to needs within communities through our community development capacity and volunteering service in neighbourhoods. Through our thematic networks we regularly seek to understand barriers to volunteering and find solutions with our members. Through our database we have a good understanding of volunteer profiles based on geographic areas.

We work with system partners and referral agencies to support engagement of potential volunteers and reduce barriers to them e.g., employment providers / DWP, Children and Young People Services, Mental Health Services, Social Prescribing teams.

Our Volunteer Coordinator forum is regularly attended by groups and referral agencies working with volunteers. Feedback from participants is invariably positive.

We are connected to wider support across 10GM, national Volunteer Managers networks, and are a member of NCVO / NAVCA.

Developing our Volunteering Service

Members organisations and potential volunteers can access our Volunteering service in a variety of different ways; in person within neighbourhoods, via our networks, over the phone or online, in addition to having access to a suite of online learning resources, with clear guidance and 'how to' guides on a fully accessible website

We have developed a bank of accessible resources on our website for potential volunteers, including a series of bite-sized volunteer training videos covering GDPR, safeguarding, lone working and equality, diversity and inclusion.

We developed our social media engagement with borough-based Facebook groups for volunteers. These were developed during the pandemic when face-to-face contact wasn't always possible, but have continued to grow in the time since as a way to maintain and grown engagement with existing and new volunteers. We can quickly share new opportunities, and have found volunteers themselves engaging and taking the lead on sharing their own volunteering activities.

Stronger connections have been made through the pandemic with local businesses to broker relationships with the sector and increase volunteering activity. We have been able to develop targeted communications and marketing to promote the benefits of volunteering to corporates and their employees. We ran an Employer Supported Volunteering campaign in Q4, encouraging local employers to support voluntary organisations in a number of ways, and sharing advice and guidance to our members on ways they can engage businesses and create volunteering opportunities that appeal to workplaces.

Our Volunteering teams work closely across our localities, meaning we can share best practice, processes, ideas and a shared route into volunteering wherever someone might live in our three boroughs.

We recognise that people might live in one borough but want to take a volunteer opportunity in another. That means our member organisations have a larger pool of

potential volunteers they can reach through Action Together. Working as one team means we can connect volunteers with wider opportunities, helping connect communities and benefitting volunteer organisations in all three localities.

We launched a new Volunteer Manager Zone in order to support member organisations in working with volunteers. Our aim was to help ensure that volunteering is an inclusive, high quality and rewarding experience, and that those working with volunteers have the resources and support they need to make this possible.

We produced videos and resources on recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers, hosted regular sessions to connect volunteer managers from different organisations, and developed templates, factsheets and videos on core topics. We've received feedback from member organisations who now use these materials in their own inductions and volunteer engagement.

"You have some fab videos, thank you for providing such great resources."

Our Vision For Volunteering

Having launched Action Together's five-year strategy, we developed our own Volunteering focused strategy – Our Vision For Volunteering.

We believe that volunteering is at the heart of creating, supporting and maintaining social infrastructure. We want to develop and champion volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital.

Our Vision For Volunteering was co-designed with volunteer involving organisations, as we hosted consultation events across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. We combined this with our organisational strategy and NCVO's Vision for Volunteering to produce three core aims.

By 2028:

- The Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside will be great places to volunteer
- Volunteering is understood, appreciated, and appropriately resourced
- Volunteers are supported and recognised for the valuable contribution to the social infrastructure of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

All of the above contributed to our application for Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation.

We were delighted to achieve Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation after the end of this year. This a credit to our teams who are passionate about volunteering and the difference it makes to people and communities. We look forward to continuing to champion and develop volunteering in our central role as the Volunteer Centre for Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside for years to come.

Thanking our volunteers

"Thank you so much for giving your time to volunteer as part of the Action Together team. What you do makes a huge difference to us internally at Action Together but most importantly to the people that come to us for support. I'm inspired by the stories I hear about the work you do, and I wanted you to know that we appreciate you!"

Liz Windsor-Welsh, CEO, Action Together

As well as registering 1,229 volunteers and connecting them with local voluntary organisations, Action Together is also supported by a number of volunteers in different roles.

Thank you to these volunteers who supported Action Together over the course of this year:

Adrian Ball
Alan Buckley
Aminul Choudhury
Andy Wiggans
Anne Parkes
Anthony Collins
Asma Begum
Camilla Guereca
Caroline Gregory
Claire Costigan
Claire Orton
Claire Yardley
Clare Barlow
Cllr Iram Faisal
Craig Bent
Elvis Austin
Equans volunteers
Eric Fulham
Gillian Healey
Hebe Reily
Ian Cochrane
Itohan Akpoviri
Jackie Moores
Javed Rehman
Jeff Rimmer
Jim Whewell
Jo O'shea
John Mellor
Jonathan Yates
Kath Scanlon
Katy Jones
Kim Tranter
Kim Tranter
Lara Orton
Lauren Stradling
Leah Iqbal
Linda Cullen
Lucia Hall
Lucy Holland
Martin Campbell
Mary Johnson
Matty Jones
Michael Quinn
Michael Walker
Michelle Facchinello
Mohammed Sarwar
Muhammad Abdulaleem
Naila Akhter
Naomi Burke
Nasir Hussain
Natalie Paintin
New Pioneers volunteers
Nick Lowther
Olivia Kenyon
Pat Davies
Patrick Davies
Paul Finn
Phil Nokes
Philippa Robinson
Rehna Yaseen
Ron Smith
Ronnie Rowston
Sarah Cross
Sarinah Khaliq
Sean Bostock
Sean Nichol
Stephen Mallinson
Steve Fallows
Steve Lewis
Steve Mallinson
Suen Adekoya
Tania Miguel
Tim Rodgerson
Valerie Fallows
Warren Doyle
Wilmott Dixon volunteers

6. Creating social infrastructure for connected communities

Creating social infrastructure for connected communities in Rochdale

The Cost of Living Crisis affected both our member organisations and the communities they support. The sector already faced challenges following the Covid pandemic, and rising costs created more hardship for many of the borough's residents, particularly those on low incomes, meaning a greater demand for the voluntary sector's services.

Our learnings and connections from the pandemic meant we had experience in connecting communities and social infrastructure. Our member organisations are on the ground every day – they know their communities, and know the complex issues people face. They're the eyes and ears in a community response, well placed to see what is happening in the moment, and they were seeing people approach them for their services and support who they'd never seen before.

We joined Rochdale's cross-partnership Anti-Poverty Working Group as a link between public sector partners and the local sector to co-ordinate the borough's response. The group pulled together existing resources to ensure that targeted support was provided to those who needed it most.

As part of this work, our Digital Tech Consortium, made up of a partnership of VCFSE organisations and Rochdale Borough Council representatives, collected over 300 donated devices from the council and local businesses. They were distributed to benefit VCFSE groups running digital skills sessions, and residents who may not have access to suitable technology.

We also helped shape the Anti-Poverty Group's winter plan, including launching a grants fund to enable groups to make up Winter Warmer packs to distribute to their beneficiaries, and funded 33 groups a total of £16,115. This enabled groups to make packs that suited different communities of identity and experience across the borough and distribute them through their networks. In addition, Action Together collated and distributed 500 Winter Warmer packs to venues across the borough who are part of Rochdale's Warm Spaces Programme.

We worked with the Economic Support Network, local groups, Public Health, Citizens' Advice and Rochdale Council to develop and relaunch the popular Cost of Living Toolkit. The toolkit provides residents and support workers with a simple step-by-step guide that will help to work out people's first priority, what options there are available to them in the borough, and who they need to contact to find help.

Our team also attended the Money Max roadshow at Middleton Arena in July, to promote the toolkit and share information on our work to support VCFSE organisations to be able to respond to the Cost of Living crisis.

Thanks to funding from RBC Public Health, we launched a Cost of Living Crisis Response Fund, offering grants of up to £2,500 to enable emergency, one-off provision for people in crisis or longer term projects to reduce inequality and build resilience, working with residents to improve health and wellbeing, and safeguarding and supporting our most at risk residents. The Cost of Living Crisis Response Fund supported 47 applicants with a total of £105,766.

Creating social infrastructure for connected communities in Tameside

Community Anchors are organisations embedded deeply in neighbourhoods. They act as cogs connecting local services, organisations, and people to place. While they have a specific remit in the area, they also have the capacity to develop and offer additional support to communities.

During the Covid pandemic, it was clear how important Community Anchors were in Tameside. We saw how they could offer a vital service to continue beyond lockdowns and become part of Tameside's social infrastructure.

We worked closely with Community Anchor organisations to research and understand their work. In Tameside, we pioneered Action Together's place-based Community Team model. Each area of Tameside is supported by a Community Development Worker, Volunteer Officer, and Social Prescriber. These teams within our larger team can really get to know an area, working together to support residents and organisations based in neighbourhoods. Working together and connecting with our wider Action Together team means we can address local issues while mapping out the state of the sector across the borough, and connecting different communities in order to address challenges. The success of this model has been demonstrated in the way we've rolled it over into our wider work at Action Together, helping us connect communities at a deeper level.

We're now seeing Community Anchors develop into fully fledged CIO's, with formal structures and ideas and projects taking shape. We need to provide capacity to help these new organisations develop so they can build on the fantastic work they do to support our communities.

We have extensive experience in asset-based community development, and now feel we need to focus on the sustainability of assets and anchors. With ongoing challenges like the Cost of Living Crisis, and the inevitable challenges to come to a fragile voluntary and community sector, we need to ensure Community Anchors have the tools and support to continue to deliver essential support to communities.

Creating social infrastructure for connected communities in Oldham

Action Together took on the role of co-ordinating the voluntary and community sector response to the Cost Of Living Crisis in Oldham

This involved co-ordinating funding through Household Support Fund 3 and One Oldham Fund – Cost of Living grants, workforce development, driving the Cost-of-Living Response through existing ongoing work, development and training on the Money Advice Referral Tool, and the development of Warm Banks.

Warm Banks are community spaces across Oldham where people can go to get warm, stay warm, have a free hot drink and some company if they want it.

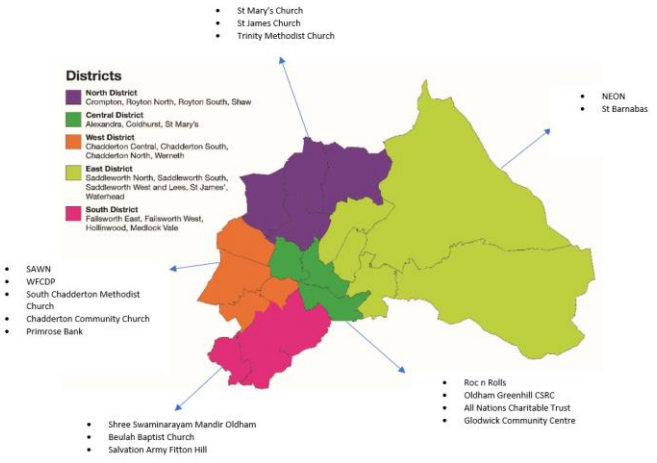
Oldham Libraries were identified as community spaces that could offer Warm Bank provision. Working with the council's district team, Action Together connected up community organisations who were considering offering some similar provision, or those who had community spaces and venues that could add to the Libraries offer.

To support the delivery of Warm Banks Action Together:

- Worked alongside Oldham Council district team to identify and onboard 17 additional warm bank community venues
- Developed a checklist for potential Warm Bank community venues to ensure they have the essential things in place to host a Warm Bank, eg health and safety considerations, safeguarding considerations, volunteer considerations
- Developed a set of resources to support those managing volunteers in the Warm Banks, these included a volunteer role description, induction pack, and bitesize training videos. The aim was that these resources would guide safer recruitment and supervision processes and help to establish some consistency in terms of the expectations and responsibilities of volunteers across the warm banks, as well as supporting the provision of a good induction for volunteers into their new roles
- Ensured our Volunteering brokerage offer was available to any organisations needing to build capacity and recruit additional volunteers; we promoted these vacancies via our online directory and in our community outreach work
- Encouraged all community Warm Bank staff and volunteers to attend the Money Advice Referral Tool training, to ensure that they were equipped to signpost residents to wider crisis support
- Ensured all staff and volunteers were confident around safeguarding children and vulnerable adults by delivering Level 1 safeguarding training, specifically tailored for Warm Bank volunteers
- Connected groups to additional training opportunities, including:
    - Pension Credit training
    - Connect 5 – bringing mental wellbeing conversation into everyday practice
    - NEA fuel poverty training
- Invested in Warm Bank community venues helping them towards the additional costs incurred to operate the Warm Banks such as utilities and staff and volunteer expenses

Oldham residents were able to access additional support at Warm Bank visits and have taken part in additional activities, helping them feel connected and reduce isolation.

This map shows the community Warm Banks in each district who received funding. The total number of visits to the community warm banks at year end was 1,701.



7. Our year developing local organisations

"We've been working with Action Together for over four years now. They actually helped us set up as a Community Interest Company. Our Community Development Worker has helped us with our procedures, forms, Child Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding training. At the moment she's helping us on our bid writing course and helping us on our volunteer project learning how to engage and work with more volunteers. It's been really beneficial!"

Hattersley Projects

Across the year we provided 1,695 organisations with 1-2-1 support, advice and mentoring. This represents a 10% increase on organisations we worked with in the previous year.

Action Together's membership organisations receive extensive developmental support, including guidance on policies and procedures, advice on structure, support on volunteer recruitment, bid writing, and connections with other projects and community activities.

Our experienced Community Development Workers are based in communities to support organisations in place, and get to know local organisations to support with their specific needs. From newly formed grassroots organisations to established charities, our team can help groups develop and achieve their goals.

"Our experience with Action Together has been excellent. They are always on hand to support or answer questions if needed, and can't be more helpful to the organisations and individuals they support.

"They're 100% professional, a friendly and very knowledgeable organisation and staff."

Alison Pywell, Oldham Children's Centres

Membership and health checks

As a result of the pandemic and then the Cost of Living Crisis we've seen more grassroots organisations emerge. To support these new organisations we've refined the process of our organisational Health Check.

The Health Check is a set of 'deep dive' questions to measure the health of an organisation and identify development needs they might have. It can introduce things

an organisation may not have considered, and give them a picture of the status of their organisation.

Our teams have been working with digital specialists to develop our back-office infrastructure to better support and develop our membership offer. This includes embedding the Health Check into our membership process, as a way to check in with our member organisations regularly, assess their current health and sustainability, and be proactive with our support. It also means we can gather up-to-date insight into the state of the local sector and create a fuller picture of the success, challenges and make up of organisations.

Place-Based Working

Our Community Teams in Oldham and Tameside continued to deliver a fully integrated Development and Volunteering offer in place through our place-based hubs.

Following the pandemic, we took Action Together's offer out into neighbourhoods. We invite members of the public to drop-in and see us to find out about local volunteering, funding for their ideas, making connections in the community, support for their community group, and community wellbeing.

Being rooted in communities means we can connect more effectively with people, groups, and our cross-sector partners. We promote our attendance online and in-place, with regular weekly bases meaning we can build up familiarity with the venues in which we're working and the communities they support.

Community bases cover a range of different venues including community libraries, wellbeing hubs, places of worship, and VCFSE owned and led spaces.

"It's been invaluable having Action Together here every week. It's been great because Action Together are here in the community, they're part of the team. People have come to ask them various questions and from those conversations we've been able to build relationships for POP as well. It's made our community more inclusive. Thank you Action Together for being here, it's been great!"

Jackie, POP Hyde CIC

Quality in Action Award

Quality in Action is our locally recognised seal of approval that publicly demonstrates voluntary and community organisations' commitment to safeguarding, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Our Community Development Workers work alongside organisations to develop policies and processes around organisational governance, safeguarding, recruitment, health and safety,

equal opportunities, promotion, partnerships and finance. The QiAA is free and open to groups of any size, and our team cater the award to the needs of each organisation.

By achieving the award organisations are able to demonstrate to local commissioners, funders, beneficiaries and other stakeholders that they deliver quality activities and services.

"The amazing support that we received at Healthwatch Rochdale from Action Together was fantastic. They made the whole process so much easier and really helped us audit and update where needed. Thank you."

Healthwatch Rochdale

Training

We continued to deliver and develop our popular #WednesdaysWeekly strand of online training.

Introduced during the pandemic, at #WednesdaysWeekly we invite speakers to present bite-size information sessions relevant to the local sector. There's time for questions at the end of each session, and we record sessions and host on our YouTube channel for those that could not attend at the time.

Over the course of the year, 519 people attended the sessions, and our #WednesdaysWeekly videos were viewed 13,040 times.

As part of Oldham's co-ordinated Cost of Living Crisis response, we introduced a #WednesdaysWeekly Cost of Living Crisis series. Each week we invited different services and organisations who are provide support and help to residents to share information on their services. Across 18 sessions we were joined by services including Oldham Council, Oldham Foodbank, Housing Options, Oldham Libraries, Action Together's Social Prescribing service, and a host of voluntary and community organisations.

These sessions were extremely effective in connecting communities, community organisations, frontline services and the public sector. The series had 5,061 views on our YouTube channel, ensuring support services and voluntary organisations across the borough were aware of where they could signpost people in need for further support.

We held 29 Meet The Funder events across the year, where we invite local and national funders to share information about the grants they have available. 297 people attended the events, with a further 2,575 viewers catching up later by watching the session on our YouTube channel.

We hosted our popular two-part Introduction to Bid Writing training seven times across the year. These sessions book up quickly, so we developed a short Key Tips video with some of the highlights from the training for those that couldn't attend. This has been viewed a combined 2,239 times across YouTube and Facebook.

We plan to build on this by producing an Introduction to Trustee Roles and Responsibilities video to go alongside our popular trustee training.

Case Study: Twilight Family Support Group

Ade is a parent of a child with autism who felt there wasn't enough support available for parents with autistic children in Hyde.

She wanted to set something up so more families and children with autism or SEND could benefit, particularly people from communities that experience racial inequalities, but she didn't know how to start and develop this idea.

Ade met our local Community Development Worker at Pop Cafe in Hyde, where we host our regular place-based community offer.

The Community Development Worker discussed Ade's idea with her, focusing on what she was trying to do, why she was doing it, and what she wanted to achieve.

Ade's Community Development Worker helped Ade write a constitution for the newly-formed Twilight Family Support Group. She explained what policies and procedures would be necessary, including a young people's safeguarding policy, health and safety policies, risk assessments and DBS checks, and assisted in their development. We also helped Ade and the group obtain £150 by assisting in writing a bid to buy sensory crafts and toys to kick start their first sessions, and with marketing to promote the new group and their sessions.

Our Community Team model brings together our Development and Volunteering teams in place, and this connection meant we were able to develop volunteer roles to support the new group's activities, and promote the roles through our Volunteer Centre service. We've continued to support Ade and the group's development after the initial set up with advice, guidance and connections.

From Ade's initial idea and meeting us in her area, the Twilight Family Support Group now host regular activities for families at the Grafton Centre in Hyde.

"My experience with Action Together has been fantastic. Thank you!"

Ade, Twilight Family Support Group

Case Study: Yuvanis Foundation

In January 2023, Yuvanis Foundation became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This is the culmination of some hard work that has been carried out by the organisation and in particular Jakir Ahmad who is the Project Manager. Our Community Development team in Oldham have worked closely with Yuvanis Foundation for a couple of years and have supported them to access the necessary tools and funding to develop. With support the

organisation has grown from a micro group with an annual turnover of £10,000 to a CIO with over £90,000 turnover for financial year 22/23.

Yuvanis Foundation took part in our Development Learning Community programme, a six months organisational development programme taking groups through a variety of topics, including business planning, marketing and financial controls, governance, networking and partnerships.

Yuvanis Foundation also completed the Quality in Action Award, proving to funders, commissioners, and other stakeholders that the group have the systems and processes in place to carry out quality work in Oldham and the surrounding areas.

Case Study: Reach Church

Our Community Team are based at Reach Church in Millbrook every Wednesday from 9:30am – 11:30am. People in the area can drop in and speak to us about local volunteering, funding for their ideas, Social Prescribing, and what's going on in the area.

Being based in Reach Church also meant we worked more closely with the church. Reach Church spoke to us about their idea to develop their outdoor space. They wanted to increase the area with new decking and planting to create an interactive community space.

Our Community Team helped Reach Church secure funding to develop their outdoor space. By adding new decking and cultivating the area they plan to host outdoor activities like planting, food growing, drawing, teaching, and movie screenings, making use of the space all year round. Development of the space is now under way, with a planned rose memorial garden dedicated to people lost during the pandemic and a plant bed designed by students from nearby St Raphael's School. Find out more.

"It will be a space for the community to learn about plants if they want to, but also just to be. I think just twenty minutes in this space would be absolutely fantastic for anyone."

Jackie, Reach Church

We also supported Reach Church in applying for funding for their Tiger Tots project. They told us about the project and how the funding has helped:

"Tiger Tots is a baby and toddler group which is run on a term-time basis at Reach Church. Following the pandemic we have seen that many parents who attended now have children in primary school, and many new parents have been unable to attend classes due to them not running. Many parents who have attended have been so glad just to get out to socialise with their babies and toddlers and to watch their little ones interacting around other people.

"We wanted to attract more parents and carers by providing a service which caters well for babies and the early stages of development, to appeal to new mothers and to

encourage them to come and enjoy the service. Getting to know other parents and carers can help to reduce social isolation. Previously we simply had a couple of playmats and some small toys in our baby section, so we wanted to develop this further.

"We gratefully received funding from Action Together which allowed us to purchase several new items for our baby section, specifically aimed at encouraging development in babies.

"We have had lots of positive feedback from parents who have attended in recent weeks, specifically that the new toys have enhanced the baby corner and have provided an easier space for their babies to develop skills. One parent commented on how much their five month old was enjoying the sensory tent. We are hoping that the well-equipped baby area will continue to attract new parents who can enjoy socialising together whilst their babies enjoy use of the new toys."

Action Together's Tameside Social Prescribing team also visited Reach Church to find out more about their activities, including Tiger Tots and their Community Garden sessions. The team met with Andy and Jackie from the church to learn about the sessions, see the facility and hear about the impact the church is having in the community.

Social Prescribing connects people with local groups, activities and services to help improve their health and wellbeing. The Social Prescribing team signposts clients from the local area and across Tameside to Reach Church, as there are good transport links and a variety of support services available.

Case Study: Chadderton Football Club

As more grassroots organisations have emerged, our Development teams have used their knowledge and experience to guide groups in deciding on the best organisational structure to take.

Chadderton Football Club is based in the centre of Chadderton and a great resource for the local community. The club had invested and developed a clubhouse for supporters, and were looking to submit a funding bid to the Football Association for a 3G pitch and to update the grounds.

Chadderton FC's youth leader contacted their local Community Development Worker to ask if we could help the club decide what organisational structure they should take. The Community Development Worker presented the options to the committee, taking into account their structure, aims and purpose, and they decided that a Charitable Incorporated Organisation would be the most appropriate. Action Together's Community Development Worker then attended committee meetings to support the process of developing the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation structure.

The Community Development Worker used their existing connections in the area to help the Club develop relationships with the local community, including other community and voluntary organisations that are working with the most hard-to-reach members of the community.

Chadderton FC got involved in our Community Explorer forums. Community Explorers bring together local voluntary organisations, services, community anchors and people active in place to share updates, asks, offers, and work together to strengthen their community.

Chadderton FC joined to explain the plans they have for the use of the ground and to encourage others to think about how they could access the club and all the facilities available.

We supported the club in planning an open day for the local community, and provided a micro grant from our One Oldham Fund so they could hold the engagement event.

At the event Chadderton FC showcased their plans for the ground, and gathered information about how the community would like to use the facilities and if they had any ideas on how the Football Club could improve their services.

As a direct result of the work carried out by Action Together, Chadderton FC have engaged with community organisations that work with people with additional needs, people who provide services for children and young people from communities experiencing racial inequalities, as well as increasing the number of volunteers that the club has.

We continue to work with the club to develop their charitable status and the Community Development Worker has joined their steering group to continue to support their development.

8. Advancing our approach to social change

Advancing our approach to social change in Tameside

We represent the VCFSE sector at some of the key governance structures in Tameside, in order to develop the influence that the sector has in creating social change and social justice.

We facilitate a number of long-standing networks in the borough, bringing together sector and system partners to address the root causes of inequalities.

Our Asylum Seeker and Refugee Network meets quarterly, and sometimes forms subgroups to work on specific projects.

The network identified a need for a simple map or guide that can be used by Asylum Seekers and Refugees who are new to the area. The map or guide could also be used by workers to show Asylum Seekers and Refugees around Ashton.

Our Partnerships Officer for Early Help had already started to do ‘walk-abouts’ with Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and professionals and staff in the area of central Ashton. We knew that this worked well and the Network thought it would be useful to design a resource to replicate this.

We set up a subgroup including some key support services like West African Development, Infinity Initiatives, Holy Trinity Community Centre, New Life Church, and ourselves.

The group decided to pilot a map/guide that covers central Ashton and includes the main organisations that they know can support Asylum Seekers and Refugees, and make referrals where needed

The resource also included prompts and ideas that can be discussed with the Asylum Seeker/Refugee, such as the locations of local shops, places of worship, health services, and green spaces.

We work closely with New Life Church in a number of different spaces including through Social Prescribing and our Partnership Networks, and they trialled the resource with a small group of Asylum Seekers.

Based on their feedback, the map was finalised and used to facilitate 'walkabouts' to introduce Asylum Seekers and Refugees to the area, making local services and support more accessible. What once depended on one of our staff members can now be delivered by partner organisations across Tameside.

Advancing our approach to social change in Oldham

Our networks are central to our ambition to advance our approach to social change.

We were a partner in the establishment and facilitation of Oldham' Poverty Truth Commission. Poverty Truth Commissions seek to discover the answer to the question, 'what if people who struggled against poverty were involved in making decisions about tackling poverty?' The Commission brought together Commissioners with lived experience of poverty with local leaders and system partners to understand the nature of poverty, the underlying issues that create it, and explore and develop ways to address poverty.

From our experience Poverty Truth Commission and its recommendations we developed Oldham's Poverty Action Network (OPAN).

OPAN again brought together people with lived experience with key VCFSE, public and private sector organisations to build on the historical and existing poverty alleviation work of initiatives including the Poverty Action Group, Poverty Truth Commission, OCAN, MoVE, Food Solutions Network and the Cost of Living Crisis Summit, aligning these strands of work in Oldham into one place.

The Oldham Poverty Action Network aims to:

- Build relationships and trust between local people and civic leaders that increase understanding of poverty
- Prompt changes in policy and practice within organisations
- Provide a positive example of co-production that Oldham can reference
- Develop new skills for all participants which can be applied to other programmes
- Maximise on the Local Motion investment by putting forward actions using the devolved budget.

OPAN's work was supported by investment from Local Motion. Local Motion brings together six national funders and was created in response to funding squeezes and the increasing demand on charities and local grassroots organisations to plug the gap; people and communities who traditionally have little power, minimal resources and are often working in silo from one another. It seeks to understand local strengths, challenging typical power structures and hierarchies that become barriers to a community's progress.

Oldham was one of six designated places in England and Wales that Local Motion supported, with long-term investment behind the Oldham Poverty Action Network.

The Vision for Oldham Local Motion is to:

- Strengthening community spirit
- Aligning efforts to tackle poverty
- Creating good jobs and social enterprise

The Oldham Poverty Action Network space is one of action and intention, a space where there is equity between people with Lived Experience, VCFSE organisations and public sector partners. Where, by coming together they can form solutions that they would be unable to achieve on their own, a space where strength in numbers can influence system change. The Network meet regularly, share insight, inform decision making and work collectively.

We have hosted a visit from the Local Motion funders and participants from the other five national areas for an insight into the work of OPAN in Oldham, and developed the network further by working with Hull University to produce research from the Network's findings and recommendations – demonstrating the impact of the work inside and outside the Borough.

OPAN has been a key part of advancing our approach to social change. By connecting people with lived experience, system partners, national funders and researchers to tackle the root cause of poverty, we can address people's experiences and challenges at the root cause.

Advancing our approach to social change in Rochdale

We recruited a Green Neighbourhood Facilitator, funded by Rochdale Borough Council, to galvanise engagement and collaborative action around the climate emergency within communities. The post also focused on community development and action connected to the Rochdale Borough Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Across the 12-month project, we provided development support to 28 organisations in Rochdale on:

- Funding – working with groups to secure funding for green initiatives and launching, supporting and promoting the Rochdale Climate Change Fund
- Green Environment Statement – helping groups set enviornmental sustainability goals
- Setting up groups – supported residents to set up 'green' groups
- Green volunteering – registered and connected volunteers with green roles
- One-off/short term support – advising groups and connecting them with our wider Action Together services

Seven groups were funded through the Rochdale Climate Change Fund, and we supported the funded groups to plan their activities, promoted the funded activities and events, signposted them towards further funding, and connected them with other community organisations to increase collaboration on future projects.

"Thank you so much for this funding and thank you so much for mentioning another potential funding stream."

Christine, St John the Baptist Church, who received funding from the Rochdale Climate Change Fund

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The Green Neighbourhood Facilitator acted as a conduit, connecting VCFSE organisations with borough-wide initiatives and attending steering groups and meetings to share the updates and insight of the sector.

One example of this was Great Big Green Week. Organisations, residents, and colleagues took part in activities connected to the GBGW, getting involved in activities like litter picking, growing, gardening and recycling.

Action Together staff also got involved by upcycling furniture, planting, recycling, and walking or using public transport instead of driving to venues.

We also represented the VCFSE sector at various groups and forums, including:

- Active travel forum
- Climate change steering group

And various other meetings and groups to update, share information and network with groups and services within Rochdale Borough.

A key piece of learning is the value of having this partnerships role. A plan for a VCFSE climate forum was developed but not implemented as the groups would have only had short term facilitation before the end of the project.

'Thanks for all your help. I actually gave up on this park and put all my files and work on this park away as nobody was listening and I've been trying for years, but when Action Together came on board I knew there was a chance, so I'm glad I gave it another chance'

Sohail, Friends of Stoneyfield Park, who were supported to become a constituted group by Action Together's Green Neighbourhood Facilitator

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Our Economic Support Network was set up in Rochdale in 2020 to support people in the borough with things related to money. It brings together partners providing support during difficult times, as well as activities which positively improve people's economic wellbeing.

This year the Network launched a Cost of Living Toolkit to help people facing financial difficulty identify where they can go for key support needs. It built on an existing toolkit produced during the pandemic and can be used by residents in Rochdale borough, or by frontline workers supporting others.

Having launched the toolkit, the network raised the issue of the lack of community advice available in other languages. While the toolkit helped connect people to support in the borough, the lack of advice in other languages meant many people remained unaware of the support available.

Action Together secured investment for a number of projects to trial a multilingual advice service. Deeplish and Spotland Community Centre, KYP, Wardleworth Community Centre, and a partnership project between Rochdale AFC, Aspire 2 Inspire and HMR Circle were supported by the network to provide multilingual provision to residents in their communities.

By bringing these projects together through the network and supporting them to develop the offer, we were able to raise the issue of multilingual advice provision and secure ongoing investment into multilingual community advice as part of Rochdale Borough Council's new community advice model.

9. Our partnership and collaboration work

We continued to play an active role in the facilitation and development of thematic networks across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

We develop our networks based on the focus and needs of each borough, bringing together voluntary and community organisations, system partners, public sector representatives and local expertise to collaborate and address barriers and challenges in communities of place, identity and experience. Find out more.

Cost of Living Crisis

Action Together was involved in the response to the Cost of Living Crisis across our three boroughs.

We knew from the Covid pandemic that local organisations were essential in supporting residents through crisis and emergency. The sector always responds when needed, and their resilience, determination and focus on helping people in need is a constant.

We used our learnings from the pandemic to quickly pull together information for the voluntary sector so they could respond and find the support they needed to support others.

We used our website to share key information around Cost of Living, including directing organisations to funding, funding support, support with energy and bills, and resources:

https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/cost-of-living

We also collated locally focused information for each of the three boroughs. This included:

- Support available from Local Authorities
- Money Advice Referral Tools and Cost of Living Toolkit to help people get all the money that they are entitled to, and to reduce the need for referrals to food banks by increasing referrals to other kinds of support
- Information on Warm Spaces
- Information on locally-focused funding, training and support

In Oldham, we were an active partner in the borough's crisis response. Oldham Council committed £3m investment into the borough to help people through the crisis. Included in this package was additional emergency support for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to support communities with food, energy and other essentials.

Action Together worked with Oldham Council and the local sector to deliver this support through One Oldham Fund – Cost of Living Crisis Support Grants, Cost of Living Household Support funding, registration and development of Warm Banks, and training and support including online Cost of Living Crisis sessions bringing together support services, the public sector and voluntary organisations to connect and share information on a weekly basis.

We were involved in the development and roll out of the Cost of Living Insight Tracker, pulling together insights from various services to give a fuller picture of issues and challenges people were facing.

Through the 'In Our Nature' programme, Action Together was approached by HUBBUB and the Co-op to pilot a cluster of Community Fridges in Oldham Borough. This cluster pilot is a first and Hubbub, the Co-op, Action Together and GMCA worked collaboratively with Oldham's community organisations to identify suitable locations and host organisations to ensure there is equal coverage across the districts.

A Community Fridge is a space that brings people together to eat, connect, learn new skills and reduce food waste. It is a site where local people can share food, including surplus from supermarkets, local food businesses, producers, households and gardens. Fridges are run by community groups in shared spaces such as schools, community centres and shops. Their main purpose is saving fresh food from going to waste. Action Together co-ordinated the launch of the GM Hubbub Community Fridge Project at Greenacres Community Centre, attended by Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham.

"People are clearly struggling and that's why projects such as Community Fridges are so vital in providing a safety net for those who need it."

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

In Rochdale, we worked alongside Rochdale Council and the local sector to deliver Cost of Living funding to support people and families through the crisis, funding to produce Winter Warmer packs for residents, registration and funding of Warm Spaces, Household Support funding, and the production of a Cost of Living toolkit and Food Support Signposting information through the Economic Support Network and Food Solutions Network.

In Tameside, we provided influence for the sector in the response to the crisis and responded to our members' needs and those of the people they support. In all three boroughs we were involved in advising and helping develop Warm Spaces.

Place-based Community Explorers and Grassroots Gatherings

Community Explorer forums are our place-based grassroots forums, facilitated monthly in neighbourhoods across Oldham and Tameside. Bringing together voluntary and community organisations with local services and partners, they continue to be the vehicle used for grassroots collaboration and gathering community insight on the issues that matter most to people in their area. Led by local Community Development Workers, they are another key part of our place-based working model.

In Rochdale, we operate the similarly themed Grassroots Gatherings as a space for voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Rochdale Borough to come together, network and share information, ideas and resources.

Community-led approaches to tackling violent crime

Working alongside 10GM colleagues and securing investment from the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, we recruited staff members to fill the roles of Violence Reduction Unit Facilitators in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. Through this work we secured £100,000 in each locality to invest in community-led approaches to tackling violent crime.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority hosts the Violence Reduction Unit, which seeks to address the underlying causes of violence and work together with communities to prevent it. The roles include building relationships with partner organisations that are working in communities to reduce violence in the boroughs.

Poverty Truth Commission

In the previous year, Action Together was part of the development and launch of the Oldham Poverty Truth Commission.

The Commission's work continued at pace into this year, with Commissioners outlining a number of ideas based on their experiences. The Commission hosted an event with a wider group of 44 partners, including the Oldham Council CEO, a number of Councillors/Cabinet Members, managers within Adult Social Care, Directors of key charity anchors, and representatives from the NHS, to share these themes and ideas. Commissioners also attended a Poverty Summit and Greater Manchester-wide meeting of Poverty Truth Commissions.

The Poverty Truth Commission then developed an action plan, linking together activity happening across the borough and maximising resource and impact to deliver on its themes and ideas.

Rochdale Community Warehouse

During December we met with the Community Warehouse board of Trustees and decided that from March 2023 the Community Warehouse will cease to operate. This has been an incredible journey for the Rochdale team, from an emergency storage space during the pandemic to supporting a flourishing volunteer community operating the warehouse. We learnt many lessons and supported many amazing organisations, and are now repurposing the funding to support members of the Food Solutions Network to grow and sustain their own offers around food security.

Responding to international crises

In June, Pakistan was hit with extreme monsoon rainfall – more than twice the monthly average. People in the country had no access to clean water, food or shelter, with vital infrastructure, and farmland destroyed.

We supported the DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal, using our communications channels and networks to direct people in our boroughs to donate to the appeal to support the initial response to the floods.

In February, a series of devastating earthquakes hit Syria and Turkey. We pulled together information on local and national appeals that people could support, as well as appeals in Syria and Turkey. In response to public queries of ways to help, we directed people to appeals for clothing and essential items in Greater Manchester, and ways people could support monetarily.

GM VCSE Accord

The Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Accord is a three-way collaboration agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, and the VCSE Sector, with Action Together a representative of the GM VCSE Leadership Group.

It provides a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) and in the thematic strategies and delivery plans that will exist to deliver the GMS vision, including the development of the strategic plan of the new GM Integrated Care System. The Accord sets out eight commitments, which we have ensured reflect the work of the PACT and VCFSE Alliance locally.

As part of engagement across Greater Manchester, in March a GM partnership event took place in Tameside, attended by each Action Together Locality Director and chaired by Tameside Council Leader Cllr Cooney, GMCA Communities and Co-operatives portfolio lead. The event was an opportunity for the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester, the GM Integrated Care Partnership, GMCA, and local authorities and statutory partners from across the ten Greater Manchester boroughs to share solutions to common challenges and look at what is needed locally to make the Accord's commitments a reality. Attendees also

heard summaries of VCSE sector activity across Greater Manchester that demonstrated the wide range of work taking place in the sector. Find out more about the Accord.

Rochdale Celebration Event

In March we hosted #CelebrateRochdale, a celebration event for the sector at Middleton Arena.

Over 100 local organisations, services and partners joined us to showcase the incredible talent and achievements of the sector in Rochdale Borough.

There were over 30 stalls, displaying the work of many different organisations including statutory and voluntary organisations, six member-led workshops including circus skills and a wildflower seed workshop, and ten speakers and performances that ranged from a cooking demonstration from Speaking of Foods to a Circus Performance from Skylight Circus' inspiring group the Silver Circus.

"Thank you for organising such a superb event. It appeared so seamless but that's thanks to your professionalism. It was interesting and productive to meet and talk to so many people from different charities and organisations – fun, too. Well done, you deserve a pat on the back!"

Wendy Fell, Rochdale Food Bank

"Thank you Action Together for hosting this amazing event."

Home Instead

"We had a fantastic time and it was a brilliant opportunity to network with other organisations, see what great work is happening in the Rochdale Borough and advise other professionals on housing options for their clients. We even had a donation dropped in to one of our boxes!"

The Bond Board

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10. Growing and transforming as a local funder

Growing and transforming as a local funder in Oldham

In Oldham, we invested £1.46million into the local sector, strengthening communities, growing social action, and putting money in the hands of communities to support them to develop resilience and solve their own problems.

We see how communities have the passion, skills and drive to strengthen the places they live, but there's still a significant cost to charities and the voluntary and community sector in order to do this. Communities need tools and resources to succeed, with targeted strategic grant investment in partnership with public sector partners.

One of our key strategic ambitions is to grow and transform as a local funder, and the One Oldham Fund is at the centre of this ambition for Oldham.

This year, we became a recognised open and trusting grantmaker with IVAR.

IVAR designed eight commitments to managing grants and relationships:

Be Open

1. Don't waste time
2. Ask relevant questions
3. Accept risk
4. Act with urgency
5. Be open

Be Trusting

6. Enable flexibility
7. Communicate with purpose
8. Be proportionate

"Our funding commitments reflect our confidence and respect for the organisations that we fund. Our grants processes will be more open and transparent, and this will enable us to build an open, supportive and trusting relationship with grant applicants who will feel confident in approaching us and discussing their ideas with us, honestly and constructively."

Sharon McGladdery, Programmes Manager for Action Together

Our work with IVAR made us think about how we can make our funding more accessible.

We wanted to reduce inequalities to access grant funding, and make the funding application process as simple and easy as possible. We recognised that having many different funding sources could complicate applications, and offering one fund, with one

single application process, would help direct funding to local organisations. And we also wanted to link the funding we provide up with our wider support offer.

The Covid-19 pandemic was a huge challenge to the VCFSE sector's resilience, and it was essential our member organisations remained viable. We worked alongside Oldham Council and local partners on the delivery of Oldham's Covid Recovery Strategy, developing funding priorities around:

1. Driving Equality
    - Enabling those adversely impacted by COVID-19 to access the help they need
    - Reducing inequality and building resilience across Oldham's communities
    - Reducing poverty and helping people get back on their feet
2. Promoting Health and Wellbeing and Supporting the Most Vulnerable
    - Continuing to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Oldham
    - Working with residents and communities to improve health and wellbeing, preventing illness and premature death
    - Safeguarding and supporting our most vulnerable resident

What We Did

With that in mind, we designed the One Oldham Fund.

The One Oldham Fund is a strategic single investment fund that uses pooled resources for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Oldham Borough.

We built on our work with IVAR to apply the open and trusting principles to the fund, creating one single process for applications.

We worked with our members who apply for local funding and co-designed the processes, simplifying the journey and making funding more accessible. We changed the focus of the process away from the traditional management practice of collecting information and shifted towards building relationships with local organisations to help people achieve what they're trying to do.

We developed our funding support to connect funded organisations more closely with our capacity building offer delivered by our Community Development team. Our Community Development Workers help organisations grow from the very start of an idea through to established charities and voluntary groups, and each successful applicant is linked up with their local Community Development Worker who checks in after funding is awarded. Many of the groups who apply for funding have been supported by their Community Development Worker to make their initial application, however for those who are just starting out or who have not been connected before, this ensures that no group falls through the net. Their knowledge, experience and connections are vital in supporting funded organisations to realise their projects, and help us deepen our connections with groups we've funded.

We wanted to distribute grants in a way that reflects the realities facing organisations now and in the future, helping essential local organisations respond to the demands on their services. We recognised that projects can often change in the time between an application and its delivery, and made ourselves available to groups throughout the funding process to support with any changes.

We designed the One Oldham Fund to accommodate different funding streams, meaning we could quickly respond to changing local needs and priorities without creating new processes and funds. This helped us quickly set up grants focussed on Covid-19 recovery, Children and Young People, and the Cost of Living Crisis.

One Oldham Fund Micro grants were made available for unconstituted mutual aid groups to apply for up to £200, and for constituted groups to apply for up to £1,000. Small grants up to £10,000 were also made available. These grants provided pathways for groups onto other larger funding pots – groups could test an idea through a Micro grant, learn to work with funders with our support, and lead on to bringing in larger external funding to further develop their projects.

The One Oldham Fund has also provided a more accessible way for local supporters to donate into the sector. By building a recognisable fund, we could point people, partners and businesses to a direct way to support local organisations.

What was the result?

We launched the fund to the sector and hosted Meet The Funder sessions to provide more information about the fund and its various streams.

Since launch, we've added funding streams in response to local priorities. We've had good feedback from the sector and partners, and are now working with an external evaluation partner to independently evaluate the fund and its impact in Oldham communities. This will help us develop One Oldham Fund further, and understand more deeply the impact that been made at a local level through the funding.

We are embedding the One Oldham Fund as a funding approach to how we grant funding locally, with the intention to deliver all local grant funding through the fund.

We are working with public sector colleagues and funders on the sustainability of the fund, and increase investment in it from a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

Our learnings in the first year of the One Oldham Fund helped us work alongside Oldham Council on other funds such as the Cost of Living Crisis Response Fund and Household Support Fund, helping direct public sector investment to people in the borough most in need.

The One Oldham Fund has also helped us develop our strategic investment funds in Rochdale and Tameside, meaning we could build on our learnings across Action Together and work towards our aim to grow and transform as a local funder across all three of our boroughs.

Growing and transforming as a local funder in Rochdale

We were delighted this year to be recommissioned as the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Rochdale Borough.

In 2019 we made a long-term commitment to the borough. We wanted to support local voluntary organisations in recruiting, retaining and developing their volunteers. We wanted to help turn people's community ideas into action. We wanted to connect communities, voluntary groups, charities, public sector partners and sector leaders to

create social change. And we wanted to provide and help secure much-needed funding for groups across Rochdale.

The recommissioning of our contract means we can continue to offer these core services to every voluntary and community organisation in Rochdale. Our membership continues to grow and we've become a familiar face people and organisations go to for support and advice.

Recommissioning also means we can get to know the sector more closely, too. If the first four years of our work in Rochdale was about introducing Action Together and responding to the needs of our members and communities, the next stage is embedding ourselves deeper into the borough – helping the sector grow and tackle more complex challenges.

Since we began working in the borough in 2019, we've seen the sector develop and groups respond to the needs of their communities. Through the Covid pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis, voluntary sector groups have been essential in supporting people across Rochdale.

By continuing our work in Rochdale, ourselves and the sector have the security of knowing we'll continue to be there to support them to respond to emergencies and social issues. We have the security of being able to commit to long term projects, while also trying new ways of working.

Funding for long term projects isn't just relevant to Action Together – it's key for the whole sector.

The 2021 State of the Sector survey told us that organisations want more long-term funding so they can plan ahead and have the security of knowing they can continue to support the communities who need them. Short term funding often leads to short term solutions, and we want to help the sector create deep and lasting change.

Rochdale Communities Fund

We're launching the Rochdale Communities Fund to respond to this funding need for the local sector.

The Rochdale Communities Fund is a single fund with different funding streams. It means we can quickly respond to different priorities and themes. It also benefits our members, as they can go to one funding source and one process instead of searching across many different grants.

We built on our learnings in Covid when we launched the Respond, Repair, Recover Fund in Rochdale, which focused on different pandemic priorities under one funding pot and process, as well as the pioneering work our Action Together colleagues in Oldham have done with the One Oldham Fund.

The new fund benefits applicants as it means there's one consistent, transparent process to follow, reducing the barriers to accessing funding for local groups. It's locally focused, with themes that respond to local needs and priorities. And we can connect our funding more closely with the development support our team can offer – so we can check in and support groups to realise their ideas beyond their funding application.

We know that running an organisation is challenging, particularly as so often funding will only cover projects rather than the core costs of running an organisation. One thing we are testing out with the Rochdale Communities Fund is how we can meet our strategic aim to

invest in the core of what organisations do. For grants up to £5,000,we are trialling new ways of doing this by investing an additional 20% of the value of the grant into that organisation. We also provide information about Full Cost Recovery and support to include this in future grant applications. We hope this will strengthen the resilience of groups and give smaller organisations the support and resources they need to develop.

The Rochdale Communities Fund will help us deepen our relationships with the voluntary organisations and charities doing amazing work across Rochdale Borough. Our ambition is to grow and transform as a local funder, and the Rochdale Communities Fund is central to that ambition.

Growing and transforming as a local funder in Tameside

With the **2022 Household Support Fund**, we demonstrated how the VCFSE sector can distribute crisis support flexibly, equitably and efficiently. Our members know their local communities and are able to get resources to the people who need them most. With the opportunity to be flexible with their delivery, they could adapt this support as needs in communities changed.

One of the key pieces of learning is how the funding not only made a huge difference for individuals, but also had outcomes that reached all parts of the system.

Organisations and volunteers felt more resilient when they could make a practical difference for people, and the support for the 32 projects created new relationships between community groups and statutory services that have continued since.

As the local VCFSE infrastructure organisations, Action Together has a long track record of delivering funding in a way that works for groups. We were able to make decisions quickly, get investment to the right place, and build a team around the programme with expertise in poverty, food security and support for families.

Our Development team worked with all the funded groups to help them make the biggest impact possible, and as an IVAR accredited open and trusting grant-maker we were also able to make sure due diligence and monitoring was done in a way that worked for grassroots community groups – reducing barriers and helping local organisations act quickly and efficiently.

How we transformed our funding

Our work with IVAR to become an open and trusting grantmaker made us think about how we can make our funding more accessible to our members in Tameside.

In line with our objective to grow and transform as a local funder, we reviewed key parts of our funding process through the Household Support Fund:

- **Unrestricted and long-term funding** – Short-term funding can lead to short-term solutions, but long-term funding recognises that needs in communities change over time. Organisations can adapt what type of support they offer in response to what their communities need, with ongoing support and advice from our Community Development Officers

- **Reviewing our decision-making** – Our staff already work closely with organisations and are place-based in local communities. This helps us understand specific community needs and how groups are responding. Involving staff in panels and decision-making connects that insight with targeted funding
- **Reviewing our application process** – We simplified the application process while ensuring we still collected the information we need, and paid funds quickly so funded projects could begin as soon as possible
- **Offering wraparound support** – Our team carried out governance checks on funded organisations, and we connected our Development support to projects we'd funded. This meant our support didn't end when funding was delivered, deepening our relationships with local organisations and meaning we could support groups through delivery, potential changing circumstances, and the development of their projects

Groups reported that it made a big difference to get unrestricted funding that meant they could act quickly and use the funds when and where they were most needed.

"We have been able to be responsive to the need we see around us, such as providing a family with no kitchen with a slow cooker and microwave and providing washing machines for families with children with incontinence. Workers carry vouchers on them to enable immediate support, for example a family with no food on Friday night where the mother was desperate and suicidal. Household Support has allowed OKE to provide a solution, families have been overwhelmed that something can be solved so quickly."

Our Kids Eyes (OKE)

What we learnt

Build relationships and trust with local people - Groups found that offering practical support alongside their regular offer helped build relationships and trust with people. Gradually people felt more comfortable to talk about what was going on for them, and groups could act on what they were hearing.

Community Cutz's project supported around 100 people with food parcels, food vouchers for local café, gloves, blankets and toiletries.

"We built up trust and relationships because we were helping people in a different way. People started to open up about issues and we could respond and support. For example, we were able to help someone to fix a broken washing machine, and someone else had been struggling to put up their pictures in their house and we were able to do this for them – if we didn't know, we wouldn't have been able to help."

Community Cutz

More collaboration between groups and services - Offering crisis support and practical resources enabled groups to build ongoing relationships with other VCFSE organisations and with public sector services. Health visitors, social workers, schools and many others all referred into the support offer, often leading to ongoing collaboration.

The White Goods and Furniture Project was a partnership between Emmaus, Active Tameside and Action Together to address bed poverty and provide essentials. Referrals came from a range of statutory services working with children and families who were living in poverty.

"We were able to help 43 families, including 27 with children getting their own beds for the first time. This had a huge impact, helping families fleeing domestic abuse or who had been homeless to rebuild their lives. Working closely between organisations and with statutory services, we were able to reach families who needed us most and provide wider support to avoid escalation to children's services."

Emmaus, Action Together and Active Tameside

Reaching all parts of our communities - Funding groups that already had relationships in marginalised communities meant that support was more accessible to people who face barriers to accessing services.

"We were able to provide culturally appropriate food and train people regularly to batch cook, food hygiene etc. Referrals come from Social Prescribers and social workers so we were able to help those most vulnerable, for example Asylum Seekers and Refugees and those experiencing domestic violence."

Syria Relief

11. How we invested in the sector

This year we secured and invested £2,526,834 into the sector, supporting 819 local organisations to get started, develop their ideas, try new projects, and respond to the needs of their communities.

In Oldham, we developed our One Oldham Fund, adding strands across the year to focus on different priorities. When we launched our One Oldham Fund – Medium Grants, where up to £25,000 was available for Community Anchor organisations, the response was overwhelming as we received four times as many applications as we were able to fund.

We launched a new strand of the One Oldham Fund for Children and Young People, with funding provided by Oldham Council to invest in the capacity of the VCFSE Sector to improve the lives of children, young people and their families.

We then added Developing Recovery Communities. This investment from Oldham Council is intended to improve outcomes for individuals in structured treatment plans recovering from substance and alcohol abuse. The funding supports VCFSE organisations to develop peer support networks for those in recovery.

We also added the One Oldham Fund - Cost-of-Living Crisis Response Fund. This funding was part of Oldham Council's £3m package of measures in response to the crisis, with £100,000 of funding available. Oldham VCFSE organisations could apply for up to £1,000 to deliver activities and services to support their communities through the Cost of Living Crisis. The work we'd done in creating the One Oldham Fund meant we could be agile and respond to get this funding out as soon as possible.

"I look forward to Thursdays, I get to go to the breakfast club and see all my friends. Best thing about it is that I get to enjoy a nice meal in a warm place. Things are so expensive now, just buying six eggs cost me £2.40 today. I'm really grateful that I'm able to come to WCWA, relax in a warm place, and share my concerns to other people who are struggling, too."

Service user at Westwood Coldhurst Women's Association. WCWA received One Oldham Fund – Cost of Living Crisis Response funding

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In Rochdale, the Respond, Repair, Recover fund continued to support groups in the borough.

Case Study: Littleborough FOOD Club

Littleborough FOOD Club received Respond, Repair, Recover funding to support one of Family Action's FOOD (Food On Our Doorstep) Clubs.

Family Action's FOOD Club project was created with the aim of providing regular access to high quality food at a greatly reduced cost to families at risk of food insecurity.

"Your funding brought great benefits to our FOOD Club members, increasing their physical and mental health, reducing their sense of isolation, whilst relieving them from any financial pressure."

"It is such a big help to get this extra food at this time. All my bills have gone up and it's really hard to make ends meet."

Littleborough FOOD Club

When the fund was paused, we launched four new funds:

- Developing Recovery Communities, grants of up to £5,000
- Communities Effected by Racial Inequality, grants of up to £10,000
- Winter Food Fund, grants of up to £2,000
- Climate Emergency Grants, grants of up to £1,500

We then added new funds in response to the Cost of Living Crisis:

- Cost of Living Fund, grants of up to £2,500 for projects that support people through the crisis
- Winter Warmer Packs, grants of up to £500 to create Winter Warmer packs to distribute to people the organisations support

At the end of the year, we developed plans to launch a new single investment fund in Rochdale. The Rochdale Communities Fund is a mutual fund to invest in and strengthen Rochdale Borough's VCFSE sector. It funds groups and projects which directly benefit local people and communities, delivered by VCFSE organisations with roots in the borough.

The Rochdale Communities Fund can support groups to try out a new project or sustain one that already exists. Action Together will provide members with development support, training and other infrastructure alongside grant funding.

In Tameside, our Tameside Community Wellbeing fund supported VCFSE organisations to deliver services that will sustain or improve the wellbeing offer for communities in Tameside (this can include improving health and wellbeing, tackling poverty or reducing inequality) and tackle a genuine gap in provision, informed by local people. The funds are tiered to ensure that all sizes of organisations can apply.

We built on the success of Tameside's Use Your Energy fund by adding new tiers of grants: Use Your Energy 500 to get ideas off the ground, and Use Your Energy 2000 to develop and grow ideas.

"Use Your Energy is really important because it gives us the opportunity to access funding so that we can put such successful workshops on in our

community, it really means a lot to these young people to stay more active and be more involved in their community. It's really exciting for Denton. Thank you, it means so much to us."

Ensemble Theatre and Dance

Funding remains the number one focus for our membership, who were still recovering from loss of income during the Covid pandemic and were then hit by rising costs through the Cost of Living Crisis. We continued to deliver our fortnightly funding ebulletin, leading to increased engagement and applications both for our own and for external funding, while our Find Funding page remained the most popular on our website with 19,190 visits. Alongside this, our Development team continued to support groups with bid writing, advice on funds to apply for, and help in demonstrating the impact that funding had made.

"Without your help, support and guidance through the application process we probably wouldn't have even been shortlisted, never mind actually being granted the funds!"

Ambitions, Ashton

"I approached Action Together because I needed help with funding to establish a base for me to run my homeless outreach project. They helped me first with a microgrant to pay for rent at Infinity Initiatives Café. A few weeks later I was saying I could do with a bit more funding and Action Together put me in touch with the Tameside Community Recovery Fund and I was able to get funding from them as well."

Ryan, Operation Joy, Manchester City Mission

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12. Our projects

Social Prescribing

Action Together works in partnership with voluntary organisations, community services, healthcare providers, GPs, local authorities and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership to deliver Social Prescribing in Oldham and Tameside.

Social Prescribing is a free way to access support for a range of physical, mental and social health needs. Through Social Prescribing, we connect people with local services and activities that can help them become healthier, happier and better-connected to their community.

This could involve a Social Prescriber helping people join a social group to meet new people, linking someone with free activities in their area, or connecting someone to a support service for a particular life challenge or health condition.

4,936 people were referred through our Social Prescribing services in Oldham and Tameside last year. Both teams delivered significant increases in health and wellbeing scores for their clients, with 63% of clients reporting they feel more worthwhile and 67% more satisfied with their life after working with our Social Prescribing teams.

We asked our Social Prescribing users to describe their experience with the service, and they said:



Social Prescribing Day

We have established Social Prescribing Day as an annual campaign in our calendar, building a week of celebration and information sharing around our Social Prescribing teams. It's important to celebrate the work our Social Prescribing teams do in supporting people to make a positive change in their lives, and we were joined by voices from across the sector in thanking Social Prescribers, Link Workers, and all the members of our teams who make a difference in communities all year round.

Case Study: Sally's Social Prescribing Story

Sally is 65 years old and lived alone. She was referred to Social Prescribing by her Housing Officer as she was feeling very lonely and isolated. She was suffering with low mood and suicidal thoughts, and had been put in touch with Social Prescribing for social activities in Oldham. Sally's only daughter lived in Rossendale, and she wanted to move closer to be nearer to her family. However, she had been told she didn't have a housing need and would be on the waiting list for approximately five years.

Social Prescribing Link Workers work with people to find out more about their challenges, interests and what they want to achieve. They offer practical, social and emotional support to people, listening to their needs before connecting them with local community and voluntary groups offering a range of activities and services.

A Social Prescribing Link Worker chatted with Sally to find out more about her. Sally said she was feeling really low and felt like there was no solution for her. Although she had been referred for social activities, through discussion with her Link Worker Sally shared that what really mattered to her was to be near her daughter. Sally also shared that her dog had passed away six weeks earlier, and she felt like she couldn't face day-to-day life anymore on her own.

Despite the circumstances being different to the original referral, her Link Worker adapted to what Sally needed and helped Sally address the root cause of her health challenges.

The Link Worker agreed a course of action with Sally, and spoke with her housing provider to find out if they had any vacant properties in the Rossendale area.

Sally and the provider found accommodation in Rossendale and the Link Worker supported Sally to apply for property. The application was successful, and the Link Worker then helped Sally find a removal company.

Within a few months Sally had moved into her new property near to her daughter. The new accommodation also has on-site social activities - the original prompt for the Social Prescribing referral - through which Sally made new friends.

"You saved my life! When I was told it would be five years on the waiting list to move near my daughter I had given up.

"I can't thank you enough, you don't know how much you have helped me. I've already met my new neighbour who is lovely!

"My new property is less than a mile from my daughter and it's changed my life and given me a reason to live.

"It's the best thing that has happened to me and I would never look back - thank you."

Sally, Social Prescribing client

Case Study: Quiser's Social Prescribing Story

Quiser found Action Together's Social Prescribing service through information provided at The Anthony Seddon Centre in Ashton.

Jyoti is the Social Prescribing Officer for Ashton and runs a drop-in session every week at The Anthony Seddon Centre. The drop-ins are a chance to ask questions about Social Prescribing, find out more about what activities are happening in the community, and make a referral into Social Prescribing.

Quiser met Jyoti at a drop-in session and was able to ask about the connections he could make, and how engaging with the service could help support his health and wellbeing.

Jyoti completed a referral with Quiser, with a follow-up face-to-face appointment scheduled for the following week and a texted reminder of the date.

Meeting Social Prescribing clients and people interested in the service in community venues means people can be in familiar and comfortable surroundings to discuss their health, and Jyoti spoke privately with Quiser about what he would like to get from Social Prescribing.

Quiser was looking for cooking groups in his area, and find out about ways to improve his health and wellbeing.

Following the discussion, Quiser and Jyoti set goals together. Firstly, for Quiser to contact his GP for medical advice on his health. Jyoti worked with Quiser to help him prepare for this telephone call, noting questions that he could ask that would help him get the information he needs.

"In the past I have not felt confident talking to my GP, buy Jyoti helped me to prepare. I made a note of the questions to ask, and this really helped."

Secondly, Jyoti provided Quiser with the detail of local groups across Tameside that deliver cooking sessions. Quiser loved the sound of the cooking course at New Life Church in Ashton. Jyoti contacted New Life Church with Quiser's consent and found out more about the course, passing this on to Quiser who then signed up for the course.

"Jyoti gave me the details for local cooking sessions near where I live, and she gave me the confidence to sign up right away."

Action Together's Social Prescribing team centre their work on what matters to their clients. Jyoti introduced Quiser to activities not only in Ashton, but across the borough too, including Café Pop in Hyde.

"Since working with the Social Prescribing team, I have achieved both of the goals I set with Jyoti.

"I have been able to speak to my GP more confidently and I am looking forward to starting the cooking sessions at New Life Church.

"I am glad that I attended the drop-in and got to work with Jyoti, as it's helped me to open up my world."

Jyoti is based at The Anthony Seddon Centre every Friday from 10am to 12pm.

"I have had positive feedback from our members who have said that Jyoti has provided them with really good support from the drop-ins and one to one casework.

"I am now actively promoting Jyoti's drop-ins here."

Ann, The Anthony Seddon Centre

Miles of Smiles

Miles of Smiles is a community transport scheme where volunteer drivers take people to and from health appointments in Tameside. Action Together administers the scheme, recruits volunteer drivers, and links the service with our Social Prescribing team and their clients.

After a decrease in journeys during COVID lockdowns, when the service adapted to take people to vaccination clinics and deliver food parcels, we saw a return to near pre-pandemic levels of demand. 67% of our passengers are aged over 76, and our volunteers act as both transport and a support for people who may be suffering from poor health and isolation.

In total this year, Miles of Smiles completed 4,354 journeys, across a total of 40,111 miles.

Big Local Oldham

We continued our work as the Local Trusted Organisation (funded by Big Local) with the Oldham Big Local Partnership Board. Q1 marked the start of year 2 of Big Local Oldham's (BLO) final three-year plan. The focus for the partnership is on the legacy that BLO will leave behind. The Big Local area saw increased activities and resident participation, and the BLO Community Development worker was contracted for another year to engage with residents and organisations. We worked with organisations in the BLO area to look at longer term plans and supporting their sustainability, as well as developing a year-long training programme to increase the skills of both residents and volunteers who support the organisations and activities in the BLO area.

The BLO team worked in partnership with Oldham Council's Clean Streets Team to design and support two engagement sessions in Clarksfield. 288 households were spoken to and most of those households positively engaged. Activities that came from the work included removal of contaminated bins, bin repairs, delivery of new recycling bins and upgrading to larger bins.

Q2 saw the implementation of the year-long training plan which was designed by the Big Local resident Board members. Free training was available throughout the year for organisations in the Big Local Areas covering subjects such as Food Awareness and First Aid for Parents, with each session fully booked. Four residents also attended individual football coaching sessions to continue to run football groups Big Local have supported.

During Q3 we continued to support the Big Local Oldham Partnership who have continued to focus on their legacy for when their plan ends in 2024. A new alley way refurbishment has been completed in Clarksfield and an IT suite refurbished in Greenacres. Both projects are well used by their local communities. A number of new and existing projects were supported around the theme of health and wellbeing of the local residents, such as a bereavement café, family activities and sporting activities for both young people and adults.

The Big Local Oldham Board have been keen to complement the existing support for residents around the Cost of Living Crisis and provided winter hampers to 40 Big Local residents.

Finally the Big Local Oldham Board funded end of year celebrations to thank the volunteers whose hard work made their projects possible.

During Q4 the Big Local Partnership focussed on planning for the final year of their plan and the legacy that Big Local will leave behind. The Board has agreed to continue to fund a number of activities during 2023 - 2024 including a men's group, a knit and chat group, a bereavement café, weekly cooking sessions, over 30's football sessions and a weekly brunch. We will work with these groups to help them become sustainable after Big Local Oldham has ended.

Healthwatch Oldham

"2022/3 was a challenging year for some local residents. Healthwatch Oldham received feedback expressing concerns about the effects of the rising cost of living on health and also regarding difficulties with accessing local health and care services as our colleagues work hard to recover from the impact of the pandemic. Against this backdrop, our staff have been working to hear the voices of local people and to represent and act on this feedback."

Jacquie Wood, Healthwatch Oldham Chair

Healthwatch Oldham's annual report highlights some of their key achievements and work over the last 12 months serving the people of Oldham.

This year's report is particularly pertinent as they have just marked their 10th anniversary since they were established to serve the local community back in 2013. Throughout these ten years, they have aimed to increase their community networks, strengthen their information and signposting work, and bring change to local health and social care systems through their work around patient voice and patient experience.

Healthwatch Oldham hope to build on last year's activity by working with local people as well as Health and Social Care system leaders, to improve services for the people of Oldham.

Read Healthwatch Oldham's annual report.

Healthwatch Tameside

"We are pleased to be sharing with you our Annual Report 2022/23. The report highlights our commitment and tireless efforts to ensure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Tracey McErlain-Burns, Chair, Healthwatch Tameside

Healthwatch Tameside's annual report highlights their accomplishments over the past year, which includes the impact they have achieved working with communities, the projects they have undertaken and a look forward to their future priorities.

This year too marks a special 10-year anniversary milestone for Healthwatch Tameside. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. In the past 12 months, 765 people have shared their experiences of health and social care services with Healthwatch Tameside, helping to raise awareness of issues and influence system leaders.

They have also developed research projects looking directly into issues around the cost of living crisis and people's experience of mental health services in Tameside. This in-depth insight led to the publication of reports focused on delays in non-urgent care and changes to the way people access health and care services.

Read Healthwatch Tameside's annual report.

13. Action Together in Greater Manchester

Action Together is one of the founding partners of 10GM, and Action Together's CEO is one of the four Directors. 10GM is a joint venture to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Greater Manchester (GM). We're a collection of local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) operating strategically and collaboratively as an integral part of the wider GM strategy.

The partner organisations that make up 10GM are Action Together https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/, Bolton CVS https://www.boltoncvs.org.uk/, Macc https://www.macc.org.uk/ and Salford CVS https://www.salfordcvs.co.uk/. Find out more about the range of current work here.

Alongside 10GM, we:

- Secured £345,000 for workforce initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of paid staff within the sector. We then recruited a Strategic Lead to drive the Workforce Project forward in partnership with all localities
- Worked to create more opportunities for the sector in relation to work and skills. We reached agreement that Greater Manchester Combined Authority will release grant investment to the VCFSE sector to broaden the routes to market and work and skills opportunities
- Secured £200,000 to further strengthen the relationships between the Primary Care Network and the VCFSE sector through four neighbourhood pilot sites in localities. We worked with an evaluation company to demonstrate the impact work, which Action Together's CEO presented at the GM ICS Health Inequalities Deep Dive event
- Secured resource and recruited a Population Health VCFSE Strategic Lead. The lead has been reporting from and demonstrating the impact of the above pilot sites, and engaging with the sector in Live Well Innovation Sites. Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside are all 'Live Well' Innovation sites, and each locality has been asked to submit ideas about areas for development and learning. Action Together's CEO is the co-chair of the GM Population Health Sub-Group and has contributed to the Live Well Steering Group and the GM Build Back Fairer framework to tackle health inequality
- Represented the sector in the new Shared Prosperity Partnership Board and GM Reform Executive, on which Action Together's CEO was nominated to chair. 10GM worked with Greater Manchester Combined Authority to initiate and manage the Shared Prosperity Fund
- Secured investment for the second stage of the GM Integrated Care Partnership Big Conversation. Action Together's team held ICP focus groups with a diverse range of community groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside
- Hosted an assembly showcasing learning from the VCFSE sector's Afghanistan and Ukraine refugee response
- Contributed to the GM Moving Conference, where Action Together's CEO was part of the Leaders' Panel and Round Table session. 10GM is launching investment to support two community-led partnerships to achieve Sports England's strategic ambitions for 'Connected Communities'

14. Our future plans

Our focus across the next year will be to:

- Embed and deliver against year one of our strategic plan. Each of our three locality teams has reviewed its priorities and will deliver this within our Operational Delivery Framework
- Continue to work as a partner within our co-owned social enterprise 10GM to ensure we are able to work collaboratively across Greater Manchester to achieve our shared ambitions and secure opportunities that benefit Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside
- Scale up and coordinate the sector's offer in each locality and across Greater Manchester to help people most affected by the Cost-of-Living Crisis
- Appraise and develop our support offer to VCSFE organisations who reach a crisis point and are at risk of closure. Inflation costs are continuing to rise, and ongoing cuts to the public sector pass on to the VCFSE sector. With the demand for the work of our sector intensifying we will increase our work in each locality and in Greater Manchester to increase the resilience of the sector and raise awareness of its fragility
- Secure resources to develop our capabilities to provide a stronger offer to VCFSE groups and organisations by employing a VCFSE Workforce Lead and providing funding for bursaries and engagement from the VCFSE sector to support their workforce needs
- Invest internally to provide the capacity to support our own workforce, both in terms of learning and development opportunities and in their wellbeing
- Dedicate capacity to drive forward our internal inclusion and diversity commitments, with a focus in this next year to deliver the second phase of our anti-racism action plan
- Further develop our internal commitment to tackling the climate emergency and commit to a net-zero action plan by the end of 2024

15. Our purpose and values

Our purpose and charitable objects

'To strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, maximising opportunities to create positive social change, promote social justice and harness social benefit.'

Our charitable objects are to:

- promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government areas of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and the surrounding area and, in particular, to build the capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.
- promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Our mission is to strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, increase individual social action, and work across organisational and sector boundaries to maximise every opportunity to harness social good and create social change. There are an estimated 3,788 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside according to our State of the Sector research.

Public Benefit - how we decide who to help

We make decisions in line with the Public Benefit guidance (2014) and ensure:

- Decisions are taken in line with our charitable objects
- That we adhere to our values in the decision we take
- We prioritise our services to help those that would be unable to pay for the support and / or who are tackling a significant social injustice
- We identify and minimise risks
- There is no personal benefit (or advantage) given to trustees or staff

Our values

Action Together's values underpin all our activities including our strategy, operational plan, workforce development and recruitment. We want to be held to account on our values, as ways of working that we will always strive for.

Believe it's possible - vision and ideas matter. We have confidence in the power of people and communities and strive to release their potential to create the widest possible benefits whilst promoting social justice.

Strengthen others - we work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We achieve this by working collaboratively, sharing skills, and developing relationships between people, groups and agencies.

Be true - we are brave enough to share constructive insight to make progress. Our unique insight comes from our connections with, and amplification of, the diverse range of voices of people and groups that we work with.

16. Structure, Governance and Management

Governance

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Action Together and is ultimately responsible for everything the incorporated charity does. Action Together's board can have a maximum of 14 Board members, 12 of which are elected from its membership, with the ability to co-opt a further two people.

Action Together's Honorary Officers are:

- Chair - Camilla Guereca
- Vice Chair - Adrian Ball
- Treasurer - Anne Parkes

A full list of the trustees can be found at http://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-trustees

Board members are supported in their role by receiving an induction and support from the CEO and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to take up our training and development opportunities, as well as external training that is of interest.

Action Together has two standing committees that steer the work of Healthwatch Oldham and Healthwatch Tameside. These have their own terms of reference but ultimate accountability of the contracts and employment is with Action Together.

Structure and management

The day to day running of the charity is handled through a scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive, Liz Windsor-Welsh. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Leadership Team, which consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Operations, and the three Directors responsible for the management of our locality teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. We have a team which averaged a headcount of 80.75, and FTE was 69.7.

Our systems

Our operating systems and processes continue to evolve to ensure that we are compliant with legislation, improve our efficiency and productivity, and offer an easily accessible service to all members of the community.

Our hybrid working model continued this year, with most staff mixing home, office and community-based working. We stayed connected through Microsoft Teams, our 3CX phone system, and Sharepoint server.

We continued to develop our CiviCRM database. We introduced a Casework monitoring module to better track and understand insight coming from our members to our staff teams, and we supported the roll out with further staff training. The Membership module and Healthcheck were rolled out for teams working with our organization/group members. Work on our Grants module progressed so that all grants that go live in the new financial year can be added to the database.

Our website

We have continued to develop https://www.actiontogether.org.uk to meet the needs of our members.

Our website saw another year-on-year increase in visits, with a total of 748,812 hits. This is an increase of 90,000 (+14%) on the previous year, and an increase of 179,000 (+31%) on two years ago.

Our most popular pages were Find Funding, Volunteering, and Jobs listings.

Our internal development

A key part of making our new strategic objectives possible is to support our workforce. We want to improve our processes and practices to make them easier and more accessible for staff. With that in mind we started a major project to align our planning and management information systems. This will be implemented and developed through an iterative process in the next financial year.

Ultimately we will have a system where the organisation's strategic objectives, locality operational plans, individual staff workplans, and monitoring data are connected digitally. This will assist in business planning, quality and performance assurance and risk management information. All our teams play a key role in making sure we deliver our strategy, and this will help connect our staff across Action Together with our overall aims and objectives.

We have a number of staff groups to address internal and external processes and systems. These thematic groups are cross-locality and membership is open to all staff members on a voluntary basis.

Our internal Anti-Racism Working Group continued, with 17 staff members joined by one of our board members. We held an all-staff survey, and based on staff feedback we:

- Delivered inclusive anti-racism training. We commissioned two training sessions for our staff and board on recognising structural racism, and white supremacy, privilege and intersectionality
- Introduced Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training as part of our mandatory induction and annual training

- Trialled adding bank holidays to staff annual leave allowance, so staff could choose to work bank holidays or book those days off (trial to take place for 22/23 year)
- Added new questions into our supervision form and developed guidance for managers to ensure that all staff will have regular, protected 1:1 time where they can discuss any equalities issues they have experienced, witnessed or addressed in the course of their work.
- Reviewed our database and processes to ensure we better track equalities data to understand our reach and any unintentional barriers or inequalities of access

Mandatory safeguarding training was rolled out and we reached our targets of 95% compliance for Adult safeguarding Level 1,100% compliance for Adult Safeguarding Level 3 and we have hit over the 85% compliance rate needed for Adult safeguarding level 2 (93%) and Childrens safeguarding levels 1 and 2 (88%).

We successfully introduced and moved our HR processes onto the online HR management tool Breathe.

We continue to ensure we are compliant with GDPR data protection, through our Data Protection Officer, and the latest employment legislation. Our first quarterly data protection audit was undertaken (with the Healthwatch Tameside team) and no concerns were identified. We also successfully republished our annual NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit assessment. Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) was successfully implemented for all our staff Microsoft 365 accounts, to improve cyber security. Four statutory data subject requests were successfully addressed, all within the one month legal timeframe.

We recruited an Operations Manager, in order to support us to develop our internal systems, support staff adaptation to changes, and ensure we have a point of contact for systems and processes.

Risk management

All risks are identified and logged in a central file. All risks are escalated to the CEO and action taken accordioning to the individual risk. Any risks that need to be escalated to the Board is done through email/phone if an immediate decision is required or through the quarterly board papers. All complex projects have a risk plan as part of the project initiation process. All risks, safeguarding and operations are logged. We have a named Designated Safeguarding Officer and a Data Protection Officer.

17. Financial review

Funds at 31 March 2023 amounted to £4,890,976 of which £3,574,207 were restricted. Expenditure in the year met the objectives that were required by the principal funding sources, as described in their funding agreements.

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and

accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The Trustees have established a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that Action Together has the ability to meet its ongoing commitments with sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of six month's running costs, redundancy costs and core committed costs
- A proportion of reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form
- The calculation of the reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle and will take into account:
    - Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
    - Planned activity level
    - Organisation's commitments
- The reserves fund is managed and monitored at each Finance Sub-Group meeting and reported back to the full Board of Trustees within the financial reporting procedures.

The calculated reserves fund will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it takes account of changing circumstances.

The reserves position as at 31 March 2023 is as follows:

Total requirement of six months running costs, redundancy and committed core costs: £595,599

Total unrestricted reserves, cash and investments (net of tangible fixed assets): £1,294,639

Investment funds are held in medium risk portfolios with the aim of growing the funds over a medium to long term (depending on the withdrawals made during the year) but the volatility of the markets over the last three to four years in particular has seen some variation in gains/losses at the year end in this respect. Despite this volatility the investments have seen average growth over the last seven years of between 3.25% and 4.9% per annum. The Board of Trustees through the Finance Sub Group review the performance of those funds and are satisfied that they are still meeting the original aims of the investments made.

Remuneration rates of key management personnel is set by the Board of Trustees via the Finance Sub Group who use a number of benchmarks and parameters to set these rates. This involves reference to local authority spine rates published in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, relevant job descriptions and levels of responsibility. In addition further benchmarking against other charities of similar size are taken into account. Action Together is a supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.

The trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity, projections, cash flows and reserves and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

18. Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name: Action Together CIO

Charity registration number: 1165512

Principal office:
80 Union Street
Oldham
OL1 1DJ

Trustees:

- N. Akhter
- A. Ball
- A Begum
- C. Guereca
- N. Hussain
- J. Mellor
- A. Parkes
- J. Rehman
- M. Sarwar
- A. Wiggans
- R. Yaseen
- J. Yates

Auditor:

Feltons Chartered Accountants
1 The Green
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1PL

Bankers:

Unity Trust Bank PLC
9 Brindley Place
Birmingham
B1 2HP

Investments:

CCLA Investment Management
Senator House
85 Queen Victoria Street
London
EC4V 4ET

Blackrock Investment Management (UK) Ltd
12 Throgmorton Avenue
London
EC2N 2DL

Castlefield
9th Floor
111 Piccadilly
Manchester
M1 2HY

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity, and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP
- Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 25 September 2023 on behalf of the board of trustees by: Camilla Guereca, Chair, Action Together



INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ACTION TOGETHER CIO

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Action Together CIO (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements through discussion with management and those charged with governance, including financial reporting and taxation legislation. We considered that extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of noncompliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit

.- We addressed the risk of fraud through management override by reviewing the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making key accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business that we come across throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' Report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Feltons Chartered Accountants

Chartered Accountants
& Statutory Auditors

1 The Green

London

TW9 1PL

Date: 4/10/23

Feltons Chartered Accountants are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Income from:					
Charitable activities	4	**-**	**6,410,244**	**6,410,244**	*6,828,303*
Other trading activities	5	**69,522**	**-**	**69,522**	*77,506*
Investments	6	**34,473**	**6,901**	**41,374**	*5,603*
Total income		**103,995**	**6,417,145**	**6,521,140**	*6,911,412*
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	7,8	**25,594**	**1,075**	**26,669**	*(56,849)*
Charitable activities	10	**23,676**	**6,355,536**	**6,379,212**	*6,075,891*
Total expenditure		**49,270**	**6,356,611**	**6,405,881**	*6,019,042*
Net income before net gains/(losses) on investments		**54,725**	**60,534**	**115,259**	*892,370*
Net gains/(losses) on investments		**90,283**	**(58,604)**	**31,679**	*25,177*
Net movement in funds		**145,008**	**1,930**	**146,938**	*917,547*
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**1,171,761**	**3,572,277**	**4,744,038**	*3,826,491*
Net movement in funds		**145,008**	**1,930**	**146,938**	*917,547*
Total funds carried forward		**1,316,769**	**3,574,207**	**4,890,976**	*4,744,038*

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 63 to 84 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Note		2023 £		*2022* *£*
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		**22,130**		*21,176*
Investments	17		**1,206,253**		*1,368,754*
Investment property	16		**-**		*150,000*
			1,228,383		*1,539,930*
Current assets					
Debtors	18	**200,481**		*289,944*	
Cash at bank and in hand		**3,648,327**		*3,067,363*	
		3,848,808		*3,357,307*	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	**(186,215)**		*(153,199)*	
Net current assets			**3,662,593**		*3,204,108*
Total assets less current liabilities			**4,890,976**		*4,744,038*
Net assets excluding pension asset			**4,890,976**		*4,744,038*
Total net assets			**4,890,976**		*4,744,038*
Charity funds					
Restricted funds	20		**3,574,207**		*3,572,277*
Unrestricted funds	20		**1,316,769**		*1,171,761*
Total funds			**4,890,976**		*4,744,038*

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 25th September 2023 and signed on their behalf by:





C. Guereca **A. Parkes**

The notes on pages 63 to 84 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	2023 £	*2022* *£*
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net cash used in operating activities	**209,707**	*403,719*
Cash flows from investing activities		
Dividends, interests and rents from investments	**41,374**	*5,603*
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets	**265,000**	*-*
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	**(14,297)**	*(12,935)*
Proceeds from sale of investments	**84,402**	*1,939*
Purchase of investments	**(5,222)**	*(24,563)*
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	**371,257**	**(29,956)**
Cash flows from financing activities		
Net cash provided by financing activities	**-**	**-**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	**580,964**	**373,763**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	**3,067,363**	*2,693,600*
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	**3,648,327**	*3,067,363*

The notes on pages 63 to 84 form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated.

The address of the principal office is 80 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1DJ.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS 102) published in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Action Together CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

2.2 Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

2.3 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

Income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it will be regarded as restricted.

Receipts received during the year which are not to be expended until after the balance sheet date are not recognised as income for the year and are included in income deferred.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the Charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is made except in those cases where the offer is conditional, such grants being recognised as expenditure when the conditions attaching are fulfilled. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end are noted as a commitment, but not accrued as expenditure.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.5 Government grants

Government grants relating to tangible fixed assets are treated as deferred income and released to the Statement of Financial Activities over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned. Other grants are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities as the related expenditure is incurred.

2.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the revaluation model, tangible fixed assets whose fair value can be measured reliably shall be carried at a revalued amount, being their fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Revaluations are made with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount does not differ materially from that which would be determined using fair value at the end of the reporting date.

Fair values are determined from market-based evidence by appraisal that is normally undertaken by professionally qualified valuers. If there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialised nature of the tangible fixed asset and it is rarely sold, except as part of a contributing business, a Charity may need to estimate fair value using an income or depreciated replacement cost approach.

Gains and losses on revaluation are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities, with a separate revaluation reserve being shown in the Statement of funds note.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Motor vehicles	-	25% straight line
Fixtures and fittings	-	25% straight line
Office equipment	-	25% straight line

2.8 Investments

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance Sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as ‘Gains/(Losses) on investments’ in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Investment property is carried at fair value determined annually and derived from the current market rents and investment property yields for comparable real estate, adjusted if necessary for any difference in the nature, location or condition of the specific asset. No depreciation is provided. Changes in fair value are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities..

2.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

2.11 Liabilities and provisions

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the Balance Sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably.

Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities as a finance cost.

2.12 Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Where investments in shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in income and expenditure. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised under the appropriate heading in the statement of financial activities in which the initial gain was recognised.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

2. Accounting policies (continued)

2.13 Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme and the pension charge represents the amounts payable by the Charity to the fund in respect of the year.

2.14 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

3. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

(i) Recoverability of receivables

If necessary, the Charity establishes a provision for receivables that are estimated not to be recoverable. When assessing the recoverability the trustees consider factors such as aging of receivables, past experience of recoverability, and the credit profile of an individual or groups of customers.

(iii) Revaluation of investment property (in prior year)

The Charity carries its investment property at fair value, with changes in fair value being recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Critical areas of judgment:

(i) Assessing indicators of impairment

In assessing whether there have been any indicators of impairment of assets, the trustees have considered both external and internal sources of information such as market conditions, counterparty credit ratings and experience of recoverability. There have been no indicators of impairment identified during the current financial year.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Core Infrastructure	1,141,251	**1,141,251**	*990,098*
Healthwatch	295,276	**295,276**	*301,806*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	2,890,912	**2,890,912**	*3,811,979*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,412,084	**1,412,084**	*1,591,738*
LTO	253,457	**253,457**	*566*
Other projects & consultancy	417,264	**417,264**	*132,116*
	6,410,244	**6,410,244**	*6,828,303*
Total 2022	*6,828,303*	*6,828,303*	

5. Income from other trading activities

Income from fundraising events

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Activities for generating funds	69,522	**69,522**	*77,506*
Total 2022	*77,506*	*77,506*	

6. Investment income and bank interest

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Income from listed investments	4,419	6,901	**11,320**	*4,911*
Investment income - bank interest	30,054	-	**30,054**	*692*
	34,473	6,901	**41,374**	*5,603*
Total 2022	*5,603*	*-*	*5,603*	

In addition income on investments held within the Action Oldham Fund and the Tameside 4 Good Fund have been included in the income of those funds. The amount of bank interest and dividends is £27,305 (2022: £26,010).

7. Expenditure on raising funds

Support costs - fundraising expenses

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Centrally incurred support costs less those recovered from restricted funds	25,594	**25,594**	*(56,849)*
Total 2022	*(56,849)*	*(56,849)*	

The centrally incurred support costs amounted to £637,247 (2022: £516,043) of which £611,653 (2022:£572,892) were recovered from the administration and management of restricted costs.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

8. Investment management costs

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Investment management fees	1,075	**1,075**	-

9. Analysis of grants

	Grants to Institutions 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Grants, Grants & investments in the VCFSE	1,798,710	**1,798,710**	*1,488,862*
Grants, Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	242,422	**242,422**	*119,365*
	2,041,132	**2,041,132**	*1,608,227*
Total 2022	*1,608,227*	*1,608,227*	

Information relating to grants made to institutions by the Charity can be accessed at https:www.actiontogether.org.uk.

10. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund type

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	*Total 2022 £*
Core Infrastructure	-	800,490	**800,490**	*918,006*
Healthwatch	-	299,406	**299,406**	*322,032*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	-	3,242,051	**3,242,051**	*2,892,976*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	-	1,520,975	**1,520,975**	*1,630,470*
LTO	-	226,063	**226,063**	*94,392*
Other projects & consultancy	16,009	266,551	**282,560**	*210,265*
Governance costs	7,667	-	**7,667**	*7,750*
	23,676	6,355,536	**6,379,212**	*6,075,891*
Total 2022	*7,750*	*6,068,141*	*6,075,891*	

11. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2023 £	Grant funding of activities 2023 £	Support costs 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	*Total funds 2022 £*
Core Infrastructure	629,291	-	171,199	**800,490**	*918,006*
Healthwatch	232,126	-	67,280	**299,406**	*322,032*
Grants & investments in the VCFSE	1,229,639	1,798,710	213,702	**3,242,051**	*2,892,976*
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,153,404	242,422	125,149	**1,520,975**	*1,630,470*
LTO	219,163	-	6,900	**226,063**	*94,392*
Other projects & consultancy	255,137	-	27,423	**282,560**	*210,265*
Governance costs	-	-	7,667	**7,667**	*7,750*
	3,718,760	2,041,132	619,320	**6,379,212**	*6,075,891*
Total 2022	*3,887,022*	*1,608,227*	*580,642*	*6,075,891*	

11. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

12. Auditors' remuneration

	2023 £	2022 £
Fees payable to the Charity's auditor for the audit of the Charity's annual accounts	**7,667**	*7,750*

13. Staff costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	**2,281,490**	*1,807,798*
Social security costs	**218,084**	*180,841*
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	**128,030**	*112,696*
	2,627,604	*2,101,335*

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Total employees	**81**	*79*

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2023 No.	2022 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	**-**	*1*
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	**1**	*-*

Key management personnel include all persons that have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. The total compensation paid to key management personnel for services provided to the charity including employer's national insurance was £152,530 (2022:£136,333).

14. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits *(2022 - £NIL)*.

14. Trustees' remuneration and expenses (continued)

During the year ended 31 March 2023, expenses totalling £6 were reimbursed or paid directly to 1 Trustee *(2022 - £NIL to Trustee)* for meeting expenses.

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor vehicles £	Fixtures and fittings £	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2022	**24,299**	**9,000**	**37,639**	**70,938**
Additions	**-**	**-**	**14,297**	**14,297**
At 31 March 2023	**24,299**	**9,000**	**51,936**	**85,235**
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2022	**24,299**	**5,247**	**20,216**	**49,762**
Charge for the year	**-**	**2,250**	**11,093**	**13,343**
At 31 March 2023	**24,299**	**7,497**	**31,309**	**63,105**
Net book value				
At 31 March 2023	**-**	**1,503**	**20,627**	**22,130**
At 31 March 2022	*-*	*3,753*	*17,423*	*21,176*

16. Investment property

	Freehold investment property £
At 1 April 2022	**150,000**
Disposals	**(150,000)**
At 31 March 2023	**-**

The charity acquired the freehold property at a value of £150,000 (based on a professional valuation in 2017) when the charity was formed from the merger of Voluntary Action Oldham and Community Voluntary Action Tameside.

17. Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £	Unlisted investments £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2022	**1,347,880**	**20,874**	**1,368,754**
Additions	**5,222**	**-**	**5,222**
Disposals	**(82,314)**	**(2,088)**	**(84,402)**
Revaluations	**(83,321)**	**-**	**(83,321)**
At 31 March 2023	**1,187,467**	**18,786**	**1,206,253**
Net book value			
At 31 March 2023	**1,187,467**	**18,786**	**1,206,253**
At 31 March 2022	*1,347,880*	*20,874*	*1,368,754*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

18. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	**175,606**	*270,975*
Other debtors	**3,267**	*1,565*
Prepayments and accrued income	**21,608**	*17,404*
	200,481	*289,944*

19. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	**19,631**	*4,147*
Other taxation and social security	**89,036**	*58,288*
Other creditors	**1,114**	*-*
Accruals and deferred income	**62,562**	*90,764*
Grants accrued - institutional	**13,872**	*-*
	186,215	*153,199*

	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income at 1 April 2022	**35,000**	*315,200*
Resources deferred during the year	**-**	*20,000*
Amounts released from previous periods	**(35,000)**	*(300,200)*
	-	*35,000*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

20. Statement of funds

The separate analysis of restricted funds overleaf shows the movements on the material restricted funds, with the balance of the funds shown as other restricted funds.

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Designated Funds - all funds	**90,487**	**-**	**(22,469)**	**-**	**68,018**
General funds					
General Funds - all funds	**1,081,274**	**103,995**	**(26,801)**	**90,283**	**1,248,751**
Total Unrestricted funds	**1,171,761**	**103,995**	**(49,270)**	**90,283**	**1,316,769**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Restricted funds					
Action Oldham Fund	**605,716**	**20,616**	**(54,797)**	**(36,306)**	**535,229**
Community Wellbeing	**313,507**	**875,697**	**(791,618)**	**-**	**397,586**
Tameside 4 Good	**305,201**	**10,235**	**(3,799)**	**(22,298)**	**289,339**
Oldham Local Motion	**350,000**	**1,199**	**(74,525)**	**-**	**276,674**
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	**157,113**	**-**	**(4,833)**	**-**	**152,280**
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	**137,174**	**413,423**	**(408,724)**	**-**	**141,873**
Rochdale RRR Fund	**274,986**	**-**	**(256,758)**	**-**	**18,228**
Restricted Funds - other	**1,428,580**	**5,095,975**	**(4,761,557)**	**-**	**1,762,998**
	3,572,277	**6,417,145**	**(6,356,611)**	**(58,604)**	**3,574,207**
Total of funds	**4,744,038**	**6,521,140**	**(6,405,881)**	**31,679**	**4,890,976**

20. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Transfers in/out* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2022* £
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
Designated Funds - all funds	*77,000*	*-*	*-*	*13,487*	*-*	*90,487*
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	*952,701*	*83,109*	*49,099*	*(13,487)*	*9,852*	*1,081,274*
Total Unrestricted funds	*1,029,701*	*83,109*	*49,099*	*-*	*9,852*	*1,171,761*

20. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Transfers in/out* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2022* £
Restricted funds						
Action Oldham Fund	*577,533*	*19,271*	*(1,292)*	-	*10,204*	*605,716*
Community Wellbeing	*364,917*	*909,588*	*(960,998)*	-	-	*313,507*
Tameside 4 Good	*291,676*	*12,745*	*(4,341)*	-	*5,121*	*305,201*
Oldham Local Motion	-	*350,000*	-	-	-	*350,000*
Tameside Robin Estill Fund	-	*290,000*	*(132,887)*	-	-	*157,113*
Thriving Communities Social Prescribing	*138,292*	*325,875*	*(326,993)*	-	-	*137,174*
Rochdale RRR fund	-	-	*274,986*	-	-	*274,986*
Restricted Funds - other	*1,424,372*	*4,920,824*	*(4,916,616)*	-	-	*1,428,580*
	2,796,790	*6,828,303*	*(6,068,141)*	-	*15,325*	*3,572,277*
Total of funds	*3,826,491*	*6,911,412*	*(6,019,042)*	-	*25,177*	*4,744,038*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

21. Summary of funds

Summary of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Designated funds	**90,487**	**-**	**(22,469)**	**-**	**68,018**
General funds	**1,081,274**	**103,995**	**(26,801)**	**90,283**	**1,248,751**
Restricted funds	**3,572,277**	**6,417,145**	**(6,356,611)**	**(58,604)**	**3,574,207**
	4,744,038	**6,521,140**	**(6,405,881)**	**31,679**	**4,890,976**

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The designated fund is a separate fund for the development of the database.

21. Summary of funds (continued)

Summary of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	*Income* £	*Expenditure* £	*Transfers in/out* £	*Gains/ (Losses)* £	*Balance at 31 March 2022* £
Designated funds	*77,000*	*-*	*-*	*13,487*	*-*	*90,487*
General funds	*952,701*	*83,109*	*49,099*	*(13,487)*	*9,852*	*1,081,274*
Restricted funds	*2,796,790*	*6,828,303*	*(6,068,141)*	*-*	*15,325*	*3,572,277*
	3,826,491	*6,911,412*	*(6,019,042)*	*-*	*25,177*	*4,744,038*

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	**Restricted funds 2023 £**	**Total funds 2023 £**
Tangible fixed assets	22,130	-	**22,130**
Fixed asset investments	329,537	876,716	**1,206,253**
Current assets	1,151,317	2,697,491	**3,848,808**
Creditors due within one year	(186,215)	-	**(186,215)**
Total	1,316,769	3,574,207	**4,890,976**

22. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	*Restricted funds 2022 £*	*Total funds 2022 £*
Tangible fixed assets	*21,176*	*-*	*21,176*
Fixed asset investments	*354,857*	*1,013,897*	*1,368,754*
Investment property	*150,000*	*-*	*150,000*
Current assets	*763,927*	*2,593,380*	*3,357,307*
Creditors due within one year	*(118,199)*	*(35,000)*	*(153,199)*
Total	*1,171,761*	*3,572,277*	*4,744,038*

23. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £	*2022 £*
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	**146,938**	*917,547*
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**13,343**	*12,766*
Gains/(losses) on investments	**83,321**	*(25,177)*
Loss/(profit) on the sale of fixed assets	**(115,000)**	*-*
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	**89,463**	*(115,778)*
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**33,016**	*(314,309)*
Other interest receivable	**(41,374)**	*(5,603)*
Accrued income/ expenses	**-**	*(65,727)*
Net cash provided by operating activities	**209,707**	*403,719*

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

24. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023	*2022*
	£	*£*
Cash in hand	**3,648,327**	*3,067,363*
Total cash and cash equivalents	**3,648,327**	*3,067,363*

25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2022	Cash flows	At 31 March 2023
	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	**3,067,363**	**580,964**	**3,648,327**
	3,067,363	**580,964**	**3,648,327**

26. Pension commitments

The group operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the group in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the group to the fund and amounted to £128,030 (2022 - £112,696). contributions totalling £Nil (2022: £Nil) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date and are included in creditors.

27. Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions.

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

England & Wales - Charity number 1165512

Accounts

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1165512

Action Together CIO

Financial Statements

31 March 2022

FELTONS
Chartered Accountants& statutory auditor
1 The Green
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1PL

Action Together CIO

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2022

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Action Together CIO

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 March 2022

The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Chair's report

Who we are and what we do

Action Together is the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside.

We connect people with what's happening in their community, develop community ideas into action, strengthen local organisations, and provide strategic influence for the charity and voluntary sector. Membership of Action Together is free and open to any voluntary organisation, charity or social enterprise in Oldham, Rochdale, or Tameside.

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies, and roles.

We provide support for voluntary, community and charity organisations to establish and develop, including specialist information, advice and training for staff, volunteers and trustees.

Action Together works in partnership with other charities, infrastructure organisations and public bodies and collaborates on key thematic work. We also promote and advocate for the work of organisations locally, and across Greater Manchester and the wider area.

We invest in the sector, and members can apply for funding from our grants programmes. We also provide support for groups seeking and applying for investment, and direct members to appropriate sources of funding.

Our Year in Numbers

- 1,508 people registered to volunteer through Action Together
- We provided 1,543 organisations with 1-2-1 support, advice and mentoring
- 745 organisations took part in our partnership and thematic networks
- We directed £2,718,848 into the sector
- We hosted 476 training sessions and events
- 815 local organisations benefitted from funding we provided
- 3,707 people were referred through our Social Prescribing services
- 18,380 people subscribed to our mailing lists

Introduction from our Chair

Welcome to Action Together's annual report for the financial year ending 31 March 2022.

This is my first year as the Chair of Action Together. It's been a pleasure to take up this role and I'm proud to introduce you to the work of our Charity over the last year.

As I write this, there is so much uncertainty across the world, nationally and locally, and poverty and inequality are at the forefront of my mind. I can see this focus reflected in the work of the whole team of Action Together across last year and the incredible work of the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise organisations who work in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

I want to thank the staff team and volunteers for their amazing work. This report gives you a snapshot of what's been achieved but it's far from everything. I'm always amazed at the sheer amount of action that we deliver and delighted to see the focus of our work and the passion that jumps off the pages.

I hope you enjoy reading this, see a small bit of the work you've done with Action Together in it, and can reflect on the work that we haven't managed to include but has been important to you and your work.

My last thanks go to the Board of Action Together, another example of the committed volunteers who bring their local experience and skills to govern this Charity. They join over 125,000 volunteers who donate their time across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside to improve the lives of others.

At this year's Annual General Meeting, I am also pleased to launch our new strategy. It's important that, even when times are as tough as they are now, we can also look ahead. We want to remain focused on what's important to our members, and set out what our role is and what it could be as a local infrastructure organisation. Its critical too that we keep up the momentum of what's been achieved and keep stiving for social justice and solidarity as people face even greater hardship and uncertainty.

Camilla Guereca, Chair, Action Together

Activities and impact

SPRING

April, May, June 2021

COVID-19 and the roadmap out of lockdown

Developments early in the year in the national and local response to COVID saw us adapt our offer to meet the needs of our members and local communities. Building on the work we'd done through the pandemic in the previous year, we adapted our information for groups in line with the government's spring roadmap out of lockdown.

We hosted a Reflections on COVID event across all three localities one year after the first national lockdown. This was an opportunity for our members to come together, reflect on the pandemic, share what they'd learnt, and look ahead to the next stage for their organisation.

Responding to our members' requests for more support and information on funding, we launched a Funding campaign at the start of the financial year.

As restrictions eased and groups returned to activities, we saw requests for COVID information fall. Visits to our COVID Advice for Groups webpage decreased, and requests from groups for advice also fell. This points to the effectiveness of our structures and initial response in helping our members access information.

Throughout COVID we learnt to adapt our services and developed our crisis response structures, which puts us in a strong position to face future challenges.

We saw a rise in visits to our Community Activities Directory as venues reopened and groups returned to in-person activities. The directory also forms a key part of our Social Prescribing work, and we continued work on developing and improving the directory. We continued to deliver training online, including our popular #WednesdaysWeekly sessions.

We also continued to support local authorities in COVID community engagement, including launching the Oldham COVID Community Champions initiative to invest in VCFSE groups and anchor organisations and support them in sharing accurate information about COVID.

We also developed new volunteering roles to support the Vaccination Programme rollout, supporting vaccination clinics at several sites, including community pop-ups in high footfall areas or in areas where vaccination take up had been low. Later in the year, we supported the roll out of the booster jab.

We built up a core group of volunteers in these settings who went onto volunteer on a regular basis at Action Together, using Facebook groups and regular communications to stay connected with our volunteers and highlight other potential volunteering opportunities.

At #WednesdaysWeekly we invite guest speakers from local organisations, services, charities and voluntary groups to share updates and presentations. Sessions are online, often followed by a Q&A or discussion on the topic. We host #WednesdaysWeekly sessions on our YouTube channel so people can watch any time: https://www.youtube.com/ActionTogether

Action Together Volunteers

We spoke to some of our volunteers to find out why they do it.

"I enjoy volunteering because it gets me out and helping, I've helped to save lives during this pandemic". Amjad

"I was shut off from the world. Volunteering makes me feel like I'm giving something back to my community. Somebody said to me 'you're a hero'! It felt amazing to hear that I am making a difference". Craig

"We love getting involved in the community! Volunteering has given us the opportunity to meet so many inspiring people and engage in lots of different roles". Sahima & Zakira

"I was hungry to be out of the house and doing something in my community. Volunteering with Action Together at the vaccination clinics helped me to be accepted at the interview stage for the NHS work-based academy." Helen

#MonthOfCommunity - Volunteering Campaign

We delivered a #MonthOfCommunity campaign in June to celebrate and thank people who'd volunteered throughout the pandemic. We also focused the campaign on our member organisations, responding to some of the findings from our COVID reflection event with advice for groups on reconnecting with their volunteers.

We took part in the national campaigns #VolunteersWeek and Small Charities Week, and launched the Volunteer Celebration Fund to support members in thanking and celebrating their own volunteers. We produced resources, arranged training, and promoted our services across the month. We also launched our Radical Kindness public artworks and sent volunteer thank you badges to our volunteers during the month.

I'd like to thank all at Action Together for the lovely badge. I'll wear it with pride while I'm volunteering - its good to be valued."

Radical Kindness Project

Alongside the public recognition and gratitude for the NHS and Key Workers, we wanted to celebrate the power of kindness and the vital work of neighbours, communities and volunteers in responding to the COVID emergency.

We have been privileged to be part of the community response to COVID-19 and witness the outpouring of generosity and kindness from people and communities. We have mobilized an unprecedented number of volunteers, supported community groups to completely shift their offer overnight, and seen mutual aid groups spring up across our three boroughs.

We wanted to mark the importance of this moment through public artworks. Public art is uniquely accessible - belonging to all of us and part of our daily life. It encourages people to pay attention to the world around them and to reflect on what it means to be from our place, our town, and our community.

We worked with Oldham-based artists Rebecca and Michael from May Wild Studios. They live and work in Oldham and are inspired by handcraft, nature, storytelling, community and collaboration. In Rochdale we worked with Rahela and Bushra, who both live in Rochdale and work from Ebor studios. Bushra and Rahela are inspired by Rochdale's landscape and share a passion for working with marginalized communities. The artists spent weeks in each borough listening to people - collecting stories, photos, drawings and memories which bring to life radical everyday kindness. We also asked our followers on social media to share their stories online. The artists then went through a design process to turn what they heard into public celebrations.

The final piece in Oldham is a "seedbank" of casts of local seeds radiating out from a central QR code where visitors can read all the community stories. The artwork was opened by the mayor at an event which included talks from the artists and a speech from the council leader. Attendees could watch the process the artists used to make the work and take away a seedling with information about how to share their own kindness story.

In Rochdale the final piece is a colourful mural on Baillie Street featuring quotes from participants, images of Rochdale landmarks and patterns inspired by local communities. The artwork was officially opened by the Mayor at a family-friendly launch event where local people hung wishes on a tree, drew their community heroes, and shared messages of gratitude.

The artists planned to develop the relationships they built with local people and groups through a series of community workshops. The 'seedbank' of stories continues to grow as local people submit their stories of radical kindness.

You can see more pictures from the launch events on our Facebook page:

Oldham Launch - Radical Kindness Project
Rochdale Launch - Radical Kindness Project

SUMMER

July, August, September 2021

Community Teams

We launched our new Community Team model over the summer, with the intention of taking Action Together's offer into local communities.

Our Community Teams are based in community venues across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside every week. People can drop in and speak to one of our team about:

- Local volunteering
- Funding for your ideas
- Making connections in the community
- Support for your community group
- Community wellbeing

We believe this place-based model will help us connect with people and organisations more effectively by meeting them in their local area, while also building deeper relationships with the host venues in which we are based. We've seen an increase in the number of engagements with our services since moving to this model, as well as some great feedback from local organisations about the volunteering, development, and funding support we've provided.

We share dates and locations on our website for when people can visit us at https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/communitywellbeing, as well as posters and materials that remain in place with information on when we'll be in a community venue and how we can help visitors.

"The impact that the Community Team has had on The Together Centre has been exceptional!"

"It's been really good working with Action Together, I'm hoping this is the start of a long-term relationship where we can work together to support our more vulnerable children and families."

Volunteer Hubs and Place-Based Volunteering

We further developed our place-based model by taking our Volunteering offer into the community. Tania Miguel (Precious) volunteers with us as a Volunteer Centre Hub Host. Precious supports the Central District Volunteer Centre Hub every Tuesday at Oldham Central Library.

Precious joined us through our partnership with The Oldham College, where she is studying Business Studies. She hopes to go to university and then onto her long-term goal of starting her own business. Precious talked to us about her volunteering experience.

"Since volunteering my confidence has boosted up. Confidence was something that I struggled with. During my volunteering with Action Together my confidence has increased. I'm able to talk to people who are interested in volunteering, explain to them what we do and I'm not afraid to speak up or contribute to conversations anymore.

"My biggest achievement during my volunteering is knowing the values of the organisation and knowing what to prioritise. In Action Together it's listening to the customers' story and providing them with the best experience Helping people from different backgrounds makes me glad to know I have contributed to meeting their needs.

"You need commitment and dedication in getting the work done and having a positive attitude. I am happy and feel content because we manage to accomplish our goals and help someone into volunteering. This may advance them and me to wider opportunities in the future."

State of the Sector

On Thursday 29 July 10GM launched the Greater Manchester State of the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector 2021 reports.

The reports analyse the significant social and economic contribution the VCFSE sector makes across Greater Manchester. The reports illustrate the amazing size, reach, spread, scale and diversity of the sector. Find the reports at www.actiontogether.org.uk/sos21

Across Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside:

- There are 3,788 voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises
- 72% are micro organisations, with an annual income under £10,000
- 13% of the sector identify as being a social enterprise £219.1 million is the total income of the sector (2019/2020)
- 79% of organisations have at least one source of non-public sector funds 34% of organisations used their reserves in the past 12 months
- There are 125,673 volunteers giving 486,124 hours each week
- Volunteer time is conservatively valued at £235 million per annum (based on the real Living Wage £9.50 per hour) but in reality is likely to be much higher
- 84% of VCFSE organisations have some direct dealings with other organisations, including 74% with local Councils and 54% with private businesses

Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham attended the launch event to reflect on the findings, and our CEO Liz Windsor-Welsh hosted a panel discussion on the reports.

Individual State of the Sector reports were produced for each of our three localities, with detailed information on the sector in each borough and our reflections on what the report means for the local VCFSE.

Read Oldham's State of the Sector report https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/SOS21/oldham

Read Rochdale's State of the Sector report https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/SOS21/rochdale

Read Tameside's State of the Sector report https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/SOS21/tameside

AUTUMN

October, November, December 2021

Investing In The Sector

One Oldham Fund

The One Oldham Fund was launched in October to replace the Community Recovery Fund. Utilising funding available to the Council from the Containment Outbreak Management Fund, micro grants of up to £200 and £1,000 and small grants of up to £10,000 are available to VCFSE members of Action Together to continue to deliver work that supports communities to respond and recover from Covid-19.

By year's end, £416,309 had been invested through the One Oldham Fund, making it our largest source of funding in Oldham for the year. We plan on building on this success by developing our local investment mechanisms across all three localities.

Rochdale Respond, Repair, Recover Fund

The Rochdale Respond, Repair and Recover Fund aims to support community action to help create a better future for local communities.

The fund was created in response to the pandemic to help repair and recover in a changing world, with the need to tackle inequalities, address new needs and enrich and support communities greater than ever.

VCFSE organisations, mutual aid groups and individuals make a significant contribution to the borough's communities - providing support and services to those in crisis or need.

The fund was open to applications from these organisations, groups and people, with 178 grants provided across the year. The top priority in applications for funding support was food provision, particularly social eating projects. The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Network, through the fund, funded seven projects totalling just under £70,000, all supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Rochdale residents.

The Respond, Repair and Recover fund proved vital to the sector, and has supported voluntary organisations across the Rochdale Borough to provide services and projects for people who might otherwise be missed.

Tameside Community Wellbeing Fund

The Community Wellbeing Funds were developed in Quarter 3 and released in Quarter 4 when Covid restrictions were eased and most groups were back up and running. Groups could apply for up to £25,000 to deliver services that:

- Will sustain or improve the wellbeing offer for communities in Tameside.- Tackle a genuine gap in provision in Tameside.

A total of £271,796 was distributed to 13 groups across Tameside, 92% of the total fund.

Toy Appeals

Oldham Toy Appeal

Thanks to the generosity of individuals and community groups in Oldham, our partners at Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisors, Albion House Wealth Management, the Oldham Chronicle, and our colleagues at Oldham Council, we were able to collect and distribute 2,983 toys to children and young people who would otherwise not have been able to enjoy the magic of Christmas. As a first for Action Together in Oldham, we are pleased with how the campaign went.

Tameside Toy Appeal

2021 was another difficult year for all of us and one where so many families found themselves struggling financially. Action Together has organised the Tameside Toy Appeal for many years with the aim of supporting families to make sure that no child has to go without a present at Christmas. Due to the pandemic the Appeal was needed more than ever before, and the people of Tameside responded with amazing kindness and generosity.

The Appeal would not work without the support of local people, volunteers, schools, community groups, charities, children's centres, churches and businesses. This year we were supported by:

- 50 volunteers
- 29 charities, community groups and voluntary organisations
- 22 schools, libraries and leisure centres
- 20 local businesses
- Our partners at Grow in Tameside, Tameside Radio, Tameside Reporter and Tameside Council

It's thanks to the people of Tameside that the Appeal has been such a massive success and made such a real difference to families in Tameside. Thank you to everyone who supported and donated to the appeal!

Training

The move to increased online working during the pandemic meant we were able to offer online training to members across all three of our localities, rather than asking people to travel to one location. We grew our training offer across the year, delivering popular sessions on Introduction to Bid Writing, Risk Assessment, Trustee Roles and Responsibilities, and Safeguarding for members in all three localities. We also brought in expert trainers to deliver in-person First Aid courses. We built on our regular Meet The Charity and #WednesdaysWeekly sessions to make connections between charities, volunteers and communities, and to develop the skills and knowledge of local organisations.

"As recent additions to your membership this was the first such course we have attended and I would like to place on record how enjoyable, relevant and informative we discovered it to be!"

Poverty Truth Commissions

Action Together was part of the development and launch of the Oldham Poverty Truth Commission.

Five PTC sessions took place across the year, following extensive support and development with the 14 Grassroots Commissioners to build up their stories, their confidence to share them, and their understanding of how they connected to the wider story of poverty in Oldham. They were joined at the

launch by 14 Civic Commissioners, who in subsequent sessions have collectively unpacked the experience of poverty and hardship in Oldham, drawing out several key themes and ideas. These include:

- Understanding poverty (and how it affects people) as a major way to assist people with dealing with its impact and reducing stigma

- The approach taken by social support systems when people first reach out for help is crucial to responding appropriately to where the person is and how they are feeling

- Creating places within our town and social support systems where people "Believe we belong... and are good enough." This includes what is offered to people while waiting for appointments or access to services, peer support opportunities, and a less transactional approach to what people might receive assistance for November also saw the launch of the Tameside Poverty Truth Commission, led by Greater Manchester Poverty Action, and of which Action Together are a supporting partner. Find out more on the GMPA website: https://www.gmpovertyaction.org/tamesideptc/

WINTER

January, February, March 2022

Rochdale Community Warehouse

The Community Warehouse is a central distribution hub stocked with food, essential items, and economic, health and wellbeing support resources for redistribution to voluntary sector groups. This allows smaller food providers to concentrate on supporting Rochdale Borough residents.

The Warehouse was set up during the pandemic, but its work has continued to support Rochdale residents. This included provision for Winter Warmer packs in winter.

The Community Warehouse was featured in Rochdale's Director of Public Health Annual Report: https://indd.adobe.com/view/498309bb-1a97-4f28-8180-d3960351553d

"I know it might sound silly, but my kids have had 'real' cereal, and they think that's fantastic. For me it's helped massively with all sorts of things - money obviously, food obviously - but having an acceptance that I'm in this situation, and also not drowning by pretending everything's okay. And also, someone making a brew for me is amazing!"

Refugee Crises

In response to the crisis in Ukraine, we worked with our partners in 10GM to put in place support for people arriving in Greater Manchester, working alongside local authorities and those offering to accommodate people arriving from Ukraine.

We launched the GM Community Response Fund: Ukraine Crisis. This fundraising campaign will raise money to create a hardship fund for people arriving from Ukraine and to provide small grants to local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations that are playing an active, practical role in providing support. People can help by donating here: https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/GM4Ukraine

We also collected information on ways people can help on our website: https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/ways-help-ukraine

Our response to the Ukraine crisis follows our coordination of a response to the refugee crisis in

Afghanistan. In addition, we worked with 10GM colleagues to coordinate donations for Syrian refugees.

Moving our offices

Like many organisations we recognised that the way we worked was changing, meaning we didn't need as much town centre space as we used to. A significant part of that change was that the majority of our teams began working in various community settings, helping make our connection to our members and communities stronger.

We could be more accessible by being based in the same places as the people we work with. Fewer people want to travel to a town centre office to access support, and technology allows us more opportunities to connect to people.

Having said all that we still know how vital seeing each other in person is, too. There are many community venues to do that in, which means we can move around and invest in local spaces rather than asking people to come to us.

Our Community Team model has been successful in helping us connect more closely to people where they are. We still had a small team working in town centre offices and were pleased to move in with VCFSE partners in Oldham at Positive Steps, and share space with Age UK in Tameside. The Rochdale team continued to be based at the Community Warehouse one day a week, working alongside local organisations.

As part of our move we offered our members our office furniture for free. We received a fantastic response to this offer, and successfully donated all of our equipment and furniture to local VCFSE organisations.

Development Learning Community

In Q4 we launched the Development Learning Community. This six-month programme is an innovative, game changing approach to capacity building support for those organisations identified as needing additional support to gain the capacity needed to plan and establish more sustainable operating models. As a peer learning programme, it has been important that it is dynamically co-designed.

The programme covers 5 key organisational development themes: "The Way We Plan", "Money Matters", "There's no 'I' in team", "Telling the story", and "Growing Together" and is delivered via a monthly half day learning conference, two monthly smaller peer learning huddles, one to one coaching, and ongoing content sharing via an online learning platform.

Partnership Working

Partnership working in Oldham

Strategic Representation

We continued to provide strategic representation of the sector across the key Oldham Partnership Boards and Covid Governance Arrangements including:

- Oldham Leadership Board
- Oldham Health and Wellbeing Board
- Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board
- Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership

- Oldham Children's Alliance
- Oldham System Health and Care Board
- Oldham Integrated Delivery Board
- Oldham Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership
- Domestic Abuse Partnership
- Oldham Communities Board
- Corporate Parent Panel
- Covid Strategic Co-ordination Group
- Community Bronze
- Vaccination Bronze

In Q3 we began working with the Director of Children's Services to appoint three members of the Voluntary Sector Leadership Group to the newly formed Children's Alliance. Our Oldham Director is supporting and working alongside reps at the Children's Alliance.

In Q4 this lead to VCFSE engagement in the new Early Help Demand Strategy development, investment in Social Prescribing for dedicated CYPF Link Workers, and a £60,000 investment to the One Oldham Fund for micro grants for CYP community activity.

Community Explorer Gatherings

Community Explorer Gatherings are our place-based grassroots VCFSE forums, facilitated monthly in each of the five districts. They continue to be the vehicle used for gathering community intelligence and insight on the issues that matter most to people in Oldham. This insight is then shared in other network spaces and has contributed to some of the developments through the Community Champions work, as well as other programmatic response work across the borough. During the months when the pandemic was impacting communities, community Explorers provided a great space for mutual support, the encouragement of Mutual Aid activity, and the sharing of resources to in order to best support communities.

Oldham VCFSE Women's Network

We have been facilitating members of the network to meet monthly throughout the year and collaborating on delivering a community offer that responds to the needs of women who are accessing support from the network members. The priority areas of work are around supporting women experiencing domestic abuse and supporting women experiencing poverty. The highlights from the network include:

- Q1 - Collaborative process for investing £100,000 grant funding via the Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership to five network members to strengthen their community support offer to women experiencing Domestic Abuse - Q1 - Developing a women's support network service directory - Q2 - Representatives from the network participating in the Oldham Women's Taskforce to represent the voices of seldom heard women - Q3 - Working together to develop and submit an expression of interest to Smallwood Trust's Women's Sector Resilience Fund Phase 2 - Q4 - Vision and planning day to prepare for the year ahead

<u>Partnership working in Rochdale</u>

Children, Young People and Families Network

Hosted by Barnado's with support from Action Together.

The network hosted two events - Tackling Racial Inequalities for C&YP, and Supporting C&YP and families affected by disabilities - with over 50 attendees. The network plans to host a further event for 15 charities to showcase various innovative projects across the borough that have contributed to

improving children and families' experiences.

Digital Tech Library

A group of grassroots voluntary organisations, in collaboration with Action Together in Rochdale, formed a consortium to purchase digital equipment to tackle digital poverty and exclusion in Rochdale. Over 500 Rochdale residents have been loaned digital equipment, with over 400 training sessions delivered to support digital skills.

Disability Forum

An opportunity to connect, share information, highlight issues and work together to break down barriers experienced by disabled people.

Economic Support Network

The Economic Support Network was set up in Rochdale in 2020 to support people in the borough with things related to money. It brings together partners providing support during difficult times, as well as activities which positively improve people's economic wellbeing.

This year the network focused on provision of advice and increasing reach, funding and producing bilingual advice provision, commissioning three new collaborative Welfare and Advice sessions at Spotland CC, KYP and Deeplish CC, and distributing 500 Financial Toolkits.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Network

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing network is part of the Respond, Repair and Recover funding programme and aims to:

- Sustain and develop inclusive VCFSE support pathways
- Create new collaborative work, that benefits the whole network
- Support the supporters

Through the RRR fund the network funded seven projects totalling just under £70,000, all supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Rochdale residents, including:

- Rochdale AFC listening project - football for mental health
- Recovery Republic - Inclusive Emotional Health Literacy
- Refugee and Asylum seeker wellbeing hub - collaboration between Caring and Sharing and Rochdale Mind

Families Grassroots Gathering

To connect and develop relationships between organisations that support families including VCFSE and statutory services. Working in Rochdale borough to come together to share information, make 'asks and offers', develop new ideas and connections.

Food Solutions Network

Facilitates community, voluntary, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations, alongside statutory partners, to improve access to food for the people of Rochdale Borough. The Food Solutions Network welcomes and supports all foodbanks, pantries, clubs and social food projects in the borough. If you want to find food support in the borough -

The FSN is listed in the Rochdale Covid Recovery Plan, which aims to build and develop all the good work that was developed for Rochdale residents during the Covid pandemic.

The FSN works closely with the Rochdale Community Warehouse, as well as funding pantries and supporting Food Co-ops by local organisations like House of Praise.

Grassroots Gatherings

Grassroots Gatherings offer a space for voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Rochdale to come together, network and share information, ideas and resources.

Inclusive Messaging Group

This group is co-designing inclusive messages, with people who are closest to some of the barriers to inclusion. It includes 15+ VCFSE partners. Topics include co-designing the Public Health Prevention Strategy, conversations about serious and organised crime, and how businesses can work better with communities.

#TogetherRochdale

#TogetherRochdale is a local partnership communications group that exists to bring together voluntary, community, social enterprise, and faith organisations with statutory partners and local providers to ensure there is a consistent partnership approach to communications within the Rochdale borough.

Women's Services Network

Tackling inequality in women's lives and connecting the dots between women's services and support. There are 22 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups involved.

The network funded seven projects totalling £25,195, including:

- Creative Consultation with women experiencing racial inequality around maternity services
- Online course for menopausal women
- Safe spaces for women drop in sessions
- The Mehfooz Project, supporting women and girls to recover from violence
- Domestic Violence Forum (collaborative work between two organisations)

The network held a 'Safer Spaces' event with six guest speakers and 24 attendees - the discussions held during the event have led to a successful Safe Space Directory (currently five groups listed) being created via the Mind wellbeing directory, and a future safe spaces scheme being commissioned.

The Stories of Strength podcast was launched for International Women's Day. The weekly podcast features Rochdale women sharing their stories of overcoming adversity. Listen at https://podfollow.com/storiesofstrength

<u>Partnership working in Tameside</u>

Examples of our partnership network highlights include:

Tameside VSIG (Voluntary Sector Influencing Group):

At the VSIG meetings we put a spotlight on organisations, looked at building leaders and organisational resilience (including coaching support), highlighted funding opportunities, and provided

information on the changes from CCG's to Integrated Care Partnerships. This resulted in a new Integrated Care Systems (ICS) working group that will feed into the local Provider Partnership under the new arrangements for health and care.

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Network:

We have used the network to keep up to date with COVID and how this affects Asylum Seekers and Refugees, including important information and updates from Serco and Migrant Help, ensuring that partners working to support Asylum Seekers and Refugees are linked up to make the most of opportunities for joint work. We supported people with lived experience to inform the work of this group.

COVID Diversity Champions

These weekly meetings bring together organisations and representatives from communities experiencing racial inequalities with population health and TMBC Comms team to ensure good links and accessibility to COVID updates. This group has worked together to ensure that messages are shared in local communities, including translating banners and posters, and put into the right places in the community. It provides feedback on what is working what isn't, linking in population health with community spaces and local people who have volunteered at track and trace mobile units. We also facilitated a separate meeting with members of the Black and Caribbean community to discuss vaccine plans and comms.

Children Young People and Families:

Alongside our direct work supporting 123 families as part of the Early Help Team, we developed a variety of projects and training opportunities with VCFSE groups including;

VCFSE Safeguarding Briefing:

These briefings are an opportunity to learn about the different roles within Tameside Safeguarding and to build a working relationship between the VCFSE and Tameside Children's Service's.

Madrasah Safeguarding:

We worked with Falah Educational Society to deliver Level 1 Child Protection Awareness to 12 Madrasah teachers and increase access to Tameside Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Feedback was very positive, with teachers saying they had a greater understanding of different types of abuse and what to do when aware of it. Work is taking place to roll out the training and safeguarding briefings to other Madrassahs in 2022.

Supporting Afghan Refugees Training - Save the Children:

We supported the local delivery of this training to help organisations better understand the needs of resettled and refugee families and children, and the cultures they come from.

The training covered understanding cultural bias, the Afghanistan context, communicating with and supporting people from different cultures, translation considerations and building resilience and coping mechanisms. Attendees were provided with useful learning resources and contacts. 50 people attended including TFT, schools, EWO, social workers, social prescribers, CAB, health visitors, youth justice, Inspire, WAD, Infinity, NLC, Homestart and Diversity Matters providing networking opportunities between sectors.

Tameside Poverty Action Group Network

The network provides a place for organisations who are supporting people affected by poverty, to

share what they are doing, ask for support and highlight key challenges affecting local people. For example:

Greater Manchester Poverty Action - Poverty Tool:

Our Partnerships Team have supported Greater Manchester Poverty Action (GMPA) with their pilot project which will look at designing a tool for people referring to foodbanks. The tool will help to support people to look into why access to a foodbank is needed and ensure people get the added support they need. The main aim of the project is to maximise people's income by doing benefit checks, supporting with budgeting, and other support. We have been ensuring that the key people and organisations are involved, attending the working group meetings and working closely with GMPA. We have organised two information sessions for foodbank referrers. The pilot was launched during this period and we continue to work closely with GMPA to ensure that local organisations are involved and that the tool is promoted and kept up to date.

Our Projects

Miles of Smiles

Miles of Smiles is a community transport scheme where volunteer drivers take people to and from health appointments in Tameside. Action Together administers the scheme, recruits volunteer drivers, and links the service with our Social Prescribing team and their clients.

After a decrease in journeys during COVID lockdowns, when the service adapted to take people to vaccination clinics and deliver food parcels, we saw a return to near pre-pandemic levels of demand. Two thirds of our passengers are aged over 76, and our volunteers act as both transport and a support for people who may be suffering from poor health and isolation.

In total, our volunteer drivers completed 4,755 journeys, covering a total of 40,015 miles.

Big Local Oldham

We continued our work as the Local Trusted Organisation (funded by Big Local) with the Oldham Big Local Partnership Board, supporting them to implement their current plan which runs from April 2021 for three years. This represents the final three years of the Oldham Big Local Programme and there is a focus on thinking about the legacy that will be left behind in Clarksfield, Littlemoor and Greenacres.

A new community development worker (employed and managed by Action Together on behalf of Big Local) started working with the partnership in July and is having enormous success engaging with residents and bringing exciting innovative ideas forward for projects in the community.

Projects that the Board supported are:

- Investment in Veg in the Park to pay for a manager, holiday activities and a bereavement café
- Investment in Greenacres for improvements to Beresford Park and building improvements at NEON Hub
- Investment in Clarksfield for alleyway improvements
- Activities to reduce social isolation and health and wellbeing including knit and chatter group, men's group and healthy cooking session at NEON
- Youth activities to improve fitness and confidence including horse riding lessons and an under 12s football group for residents in Clarksfield
- The board working very closely with several partners including Oldham Council's new District Team for Oldham East and Oasis Hub. We have supported Oasis Hub to provide creative English and other activities for families at Oasis Academy Clarksfield. The school have made community facilities

available for the use of residents which has helped with the Board's engagement with residents.
- Outdoor exercise equipment has been installed in Waterhead Park and Arundel Street Park. This was jointly funded by Oldham Council and Big Local Oldham. It is proving to be well used in both locations. We followed this up by developing engagement and training sessions with OCLL
- The Board continue to support new ideas in their areas, however the focus is now on the legacy that Big Local Oldham will leave behind and we are working with the Board to develop longer term plans for the groups that have been established with Big Local Oldham support and a training programme for residents to include a mix of sessions to support them to develop social action projects e.g. football coaching, food and hygiene, first aid, and personal development and wellbeing

Social Prescribing

For Social Prescribing Day on March 10 we released a series of videos to promote Social Prescribing.

We asked four people from various different services involved in Social Prescribing to tell us about the benefits. We spoke to Dr. Bircher as a Primary Care referrer, our Social Prescribing Officer Jyoti Mckellar, David Banks at the Macmillan Hub service, and Sharon Hall from Noah's Art, who provide community activities for our clients. These videos will be used in the future to promote our services, helping to generate referrers and increase referrals into the Oldham and Tameside services.

Both our Oldham and Tameside Social Prescribing service users report increased wellbeing scores following their interactions with the services.

Healthwatch Oldham

Healthwatch Oldham's annual report highlights all the work Healthwatch Oldham has done over the last 12 months and includes examples of how we have engaged and supported Oldham residents.

Our year at a glance:

- We provided advice and information to 1290 people this year
- We engaged with over 500 people in specific projects which helped us to produce 7 reports throughout the year

"I would like to begin by paying tribute and giving special thanks to our hardworking Healthwatch Oldham team who have adapted amazingly to our new hybrid working arrangements and kept the core business of Healthwatch Oldham continuing, through another significant period of change. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the local Oldham community for continuing to work with us, and our partners and stakeholders for giving us the space and ability to play a key role in the local system. None of this would be possible without the support of our Board, and our host organisation Action Together, this important set-up for our Healthwatch enables us to try our best and helps us to take our work from strength to strength" - Tamoor Tariq, Healthwatch Oldham Manager

Read Healthwatch Oldham's annual report 2021-22 at www.healthwatcholdham.co.uk

Healthwatch Tameside

"For a second year, all of our lives have been dominated by the Covid pandemic and just like every other organisation we at Healthwatch Tameside have had to adjust the way that we work whilst always maintaining focus on delivering our statutory duties. We have had to adapt the way in which we listen to, and gather the experience of people needing support from health and social care services and I am most proud of the way that we have achieved this. We recognise that not everyone has access to, or the ability to use digital technology and we have retained the use of postal surveys and the telephone as ways of collecting information.

Most of this year I have been Acting Chair since the untimely and tragic death of Professor Dr Kailash

Chand OBE in July 2021. I am grateful for the support of the Board of Healthwatch Tameside and the exemplary team of staff who are dedicated to promoting the involvement of local people, monitoring the standards of service received by local people, obtaining their views and producing reports to inform health and care leaders, and sharing intelligence (suitably anonymised) with other Healthwatch to have the greatest impact." - Tracey McErlain-Burns, Chair

Read Healthwatch Tameside's annual report at www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk

Action Together in Greater Manchester

Across the year Action Together has continued to work actively across Greater Manchester including:

- In late September, our CEO Liz, represented the VCSE for formal signing of the GM Accord. The purpose of the new Accord is to further develop how the partners work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and citizens.

- Greater Manchester leaders in local government, health and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) have come together to sign a tripartite Accord to work together in a collaborative way to tackle entrenched inequalities.

- As a founding partner of 10GM, Action Together continues to line manage the 10GM team. 10GM's work across this quarter has focussed on engagement and activity as part of the GM wide emergency response framework. In addition, across this period 10GM colleagues worked to coordinate donations for Syrian Refugees and held two GM-wide coordination meetings with GMCA leads and the VCSE.

- In partnership with the VCSE Leadership Group we have re-established the VCSE Sub-Group on Population Health, Liz Windsor-Welsh is the Interim Chair of this group. Action Together's Maddy Hubbard is the Co-Chair of the Inclusive Economy Sub-Group. We continue to engage and contribute to GM workshops and discussion on the Integrated Care System structures and the part the VCSE plays both in localities and in the GM structures, including providing support as part of 10GM to explore the establishment of a GM VCSE Alternative Provider Federation.

- Establishing strategic relationships with other GM joint ventures - GM Active and GM Housing Providers.

- There has been significant engagement with GM VCSE partners on the governance and formation of the new GMICS. 10GM has been working with larger social enterprises and charities to establish the GM Alternative Provider Partnership. We have secured the initial investment and recruited an Executive Chair.

- Action Together's CEO has supported the VCSE Leadership Group to establish a GM VCSE Population Health Group, developing a strategic and engagement routes into the GM Population Health Board. She has also strategically represented the VCSE sector on GM Contain Cell and has been engaged with AGMA partners on developing the emergency structures to better connect to the VCSE in GM and in the areas that Action Together works.

- We have been part of the LGBQT+ panel to increase support and awareness.

- We have worked as part of the GM Moving executive to review and refresh its strategy. Action Together in Greater Manchester

Financial review

Funds at 31 March 2022 amounted to £4,744,038 of which £3,572,277 were restricted. Expenditure in the year met the objectives that were required by the principle funding sources, as described in their funding agreements.

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The Trustees have established a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that Action Together has the ability to meet its ongoing commitments with sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of six month's running costs, redundancy costs and core committed costs

- A proportion of reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form

- The calculation of the reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle and will take into account:

1. Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted

2. Planned activity level

3. Organisation's commitments

The reserves fund is managed and monitored at each Finance Sub-Group meeting and reported back to the full Board of Trustees within the financial reporting procedures.

The calculated reserves fund will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it takes account of changing circumstances.

The reserves position as of 31st March 2022 is as follows:

- Total requirement of six months running costs, redundancy and committed core costs: £535,882

- Total unrestricted reserves, cash and investments (net of tangible fixed assets): £1,000,585

The trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity, projections, cash flows and reserves and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

About us: Our purpose, values and strategic objectives

Our purpose and charitable objects

'To strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, maximising opportunities to create positive social change, promote social justice and harness social benefit.'

Our charitable objects are to;

- promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government areas of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and the surrounding area and, in particular, to build the capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.

- promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Our mission is to strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, increase individual social action, and work across organisational and sector boundaries to maximise every opportunity to harness social good and create social change. There are an estimated 3788 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside according to our State of the Sector research.

Public Benefit - how we decide who to help

We make decisions in line with the Public Benefit guidance (2014) and ensure;

- Decisions are taken in line with our charitable objects

- That we adhere to our values in the decision we take

- We prioritise our services to help those that would be unable to pay for the support and / or who are tackling a significant social injustice

- We identify and minimise risks

- There is no personal benefit (or advantage) given to trustees or staff

Our values

Action Together's values underpin all its activities including our strategy, operational plan, workforce development and recruitment. We want to be held to account on our values, as ways of working that we will always strive for.

Believe it's possible - vision and ideas matter. We have confidence in the power of people and communities and strive to release their potential to create the widest possible benefits whilst promoting social justice;

Strengthen others - we work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We achieve this by working collaboratively, sharing skills, and developing relationships between people, groups and agencies;

Be true - we are brave enough to share constructive insight to make progress. Our unique insight

comes from our connections with, and amplification of, the diverse range of voices of people and groups that we work with.

Structure, governance and management

Governance

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Action Together and is ultimately responsible for everything the incorporated charitable organisation does. Action Together's board can have a maximum of 14 Board members, 12 of which are elected from its membership, with the ability to co-opt a further 2 people. Following the retirement of our Chair Roger Farnworth we were pleased to welcome Camilla Guereca as our new Chair. Camilla has served on the Board of Action Together since 2016.

Action Together Honorary Officers are:
Chair - Camilla Guereca
Vice Chair - Adrian Ball
Treasurer - Anne Parkes

We welcomed two new Board members to the organisation following our AGM on 8 December 2021. A full list of the trustees can be found at http://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-trustees

Board members are supported in their role by receiving an induction, and are offered support from the CEO and from other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to take up training and development opportunities, as well as external training that is of interest. Action Together has been working to review and strengthen its governance including an internal review of our strengths and opportunities for development.

Action Together has two standing committees that steer the work of Healthwatch Oldham and Healthwatch Tameside. These have their own terms of reference but ultimate accountability of the contracts and employment is with Action Together.

Structure and management

The day to day running of the charity is handled through a scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive, Liz Windsor-Welsh. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Leadership Team, which consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Operations, and the three Directors responsible for the management of our three locality teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. We had a team which averaged a headcount of 80 people.

Following the end of the previous financial year we closed our Rochdale office, and towards the end of this financial year we moved from our Oldham and Tameside offices. Our Oldham team are now based at Positive Steps, 80 Union St, Oldham OL1 1DJ. Our Tameside team are now based at Age UK, 131 Katherine St, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7AW.

We continued to build on our place-based working model, with teams based in local community venues, and as such have not re-opened our offices to the public. We continue to host meetings and visitors in our two bases, but are delivering our public-facing service in the community.

We continued to play a key part in 10GM, the joint venture to support sector in the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester. Action Together represent three of the boroughs, and remain committed to working with our colleagues at Bolton CVS, Salford CVS, MACC and associates of other boroughs in order to achieve our charitable objects.

Our Systems

Our operating systems and processes continue to evolve to ensure that we are compliant with legislation, improve our efficiency and productivity, and offer an easily accessible service to all members of the community.

We closely followed COVID-19 restrictions as they developed over the course of the year, adapting our working models with the safety of our staff, member organisations and the people they support a high priority.

We further developed our hybrid working model, with most staff mixing home, office and community-based working. We stayed connected through Microsoft Teams, our 3CX phone system, and a refreshed shared server. Following some initial challenges with practicalities in accessing the new server, we moved to a Sharepoint model. This has been more successful, with staff more able to access shared files without the need for numerous logins and programs.

We have a number of staff groups to address internal and external processes and systems. These thematic groups are cross-locality and membership is open to all staff members on a voluntary basis.

We have formed an internal Anti-Racism Working Group across Action Together. The group has begun looking at our internal and external anti-racism work. The group held one initial session this quarter to meet each other and scope out the work, followed by anti-racism training delivered by Intersectional GLAM. The group will meet on a monthly basis, and Action Together's board will be identifying a trustee to connect with the work.

We have continued to develop https://www.actiontogether.org.uk to meet the needs of our members. Our website saw another year-on-year increase in visits, with a total of 658,665 hits, an increase of over 89,000 on the previous year. Our most popular pages were Find Funding, Volunteering, and Jobs listings. We also saw visits throughout the year to our online Covid advice and information. We also completed improvements to the Community Activities Directory.

We set up a Digital Accessibility Group, with attendees from member organisations and partners supporting us to improve the accessibility of our digital presence and communications. As a result we have introduced an accessibility widget across our website, featuring a text reader, language translation, and other functions.

We continue to ensure we are compliant with GDPR data protection, through our Data Protection Officer, and the latest employment legislation. We produced our first Data Protection and Data Security Annual Report, to provide the organisation's Senior Leadership Team and Board with an overview of all key issues relating to data protection and data security.

We will look to recruit an Operations Manager in the next financial year, in order to support us to develop our internal systems, support staff with adoption, and ensure we have a point of contact for systems and processes.

Risk management

All risks are identified and logged in a central file. All risks are escalated to the CEO and action taken according to the individual risk. Any risks that need to be escalated to the Board is done through email/phone if an immediate decision is required or through the quarterly board papers. All complex projects have a risk plan as part of the project initiation process.

Future plans

Our Strategy to 2028

We will be launching our new five-year strategy in Q3 of the next financial year, to take us from 2023 to 2028. The strategy will cover all three of our localities, with these shared strategic priorities:
- Strategic Priority #1: Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities
- Strategic Priority #2: Advance our approach to social change
- Strategic Priority #3: Grow and transform as a local funder

Strategic Priority #1: Strengthen social infrastructure for connected communities

We will do this by:

- Working in neighbourhoods, making Action Together's offer accessible to all parts of our communities
- Protecting our teams' capacity to build deep relationships with groups and champion what they do
- Developing more community-led, community-owned assets
- Strengthening community leadership and the role of community anchors in shaping neighbourhoods

How will we know we've succeeded?

- Annual membership feedback shows a deepening of our relationship with groups that helps them create change
- The economic difference the sector makes is better understood and wealth-building approaches are more widespread
- Community leadership is stronger and creating change in neighbourhoods

Strategic Priority #2: Advance our approach to social change

We will do this by:

- Developing our social change networks so they are owned by members with shared learning, power and decision making to make a real difference
- Developing participatory investment models that support networks and partnerships to take shared action
- Investing in our team and cultivating our skills so we can develop our approach to enable collective action

How will we know we've succeeded?

- We can tell powerful impact stories about collective action addressing root causes that has led to real change
- We have developed successful new practices and investment models that increase trust and collaboration
- More sector leaders feel supported and believe they can affect change

Strategic Priority #3: Grow and transform as a local funder

We will do this by:

- Establishing shared strategic investment mechanisms in each borough for public and private partners
- Investing in and trusting local organisations - more longer term funding, less bureaucracy, and more investment in the core of what they do
- Connecting and enhancing our development support so we invest time and skills as well as money

- Trying new ways for local groups to make decisions about where investment in their area goes

How will we know we've succeeded?

- There is a recognised way for partners to invest in each borough, creating more strategic and collective decision making
- Groups report a shift in our approach to grant giving
- Amazing impact stories are made possible by getting money to the right organisations and working with them to achieve their aims

What we need to make this possible

#1: Strategic Decision Making

We anticipate increasing potential for Action Together to be asked to take on direct provision, develop a commissioning relationship with our members, or fill gaps left by under-funded public services.

We therefore need to know confidently and consistently what to say 'yes' and 'no' to. If we are going to do more but better, we need to carefully decide what we think we can do that will have the greatest collective benefit.

We will do this by asking:
- Does this ask meet our charitable objectives to strengthen the VCFSE sector or lead to positive social change?
- Does it fit with our core work as an infrastructure organisation?
- Is this something our members offer? Or that they could offer with some development support?
- Can we change or influence the opportunity?

#2: Systems and processes

We will have the skills and capacity to drive change across the organisation. The resilience of the people who make up Action Together is vital to what we do.

We need to:

- Create more time for our team to lead, learn and rest by minimising duplication
- Automate processes wherever we can
- Increase staff training and development
- Practice leadership at every level of the organisation to give our teams the confidence to work differently

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Action Together CIO	
Charity registration number	1165512	
Principal office	80 Union Street Oldham OL1 1DJ	
The trustees	A. Ball	
	R. Farnworth	(Resigned 31 March 2022)
	C. Guereca	
	A. Parkes	
	J. Yates	
	A. Wiggans	
	J. Rehmen	
	M. Sarwar	
	R. Yaseen	
	J. Mellor	
	N. Akhter	(Appointed 20 May 2021)
	A. Begum Hussain	(Appointed 8 December 2021)
	N. Hussain	(Appointed 8 December 2021)
Auditor	Feltons Statutory Auditor & Chartered Accountants 1 The Green Richmond Surrey TW9 1PL	
Bankers	Unity Trust Bank plc 4 Brindley Place Birmingham B1 2HP	
	CCLA Investment Management Senator House 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET	
	Blackrock Investment Management (UK) Ltd 12 Throgmorton Avenue London EC2N 2DL	
	Castlefield 9th Floor 111 Piccadilly Manchester M1 2HY	

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 26 January 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



C. Guereca
Trustee

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Action Together CIO (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the statement of financial activities, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements through discussion with management and those charged with governance, including financial reporting and taxation legislation. We considered that extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of noncompliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.

- We addressed the risk of fraud through management override by reviewing the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making key accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business that we come across throughout the audit.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Feltons

Feltons
Chartered Accountants & statutory auditor
1 The Green
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1PL

27/1/ 2023

Feltons is eligible to act as auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Action Together CIO

Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 Unrestricted funds £	2022 Restricted funds £	2022 **Total funds** £	2021 Total funds £
Income					
Funded charitable activities	**4**	–	6,828,303	6,828,303	4,691,156
Activities for generating funds	**5**	77,506	–	77,506	55,866
Investment income	**6**	5,603	–	5,603	6,761
Total income		83,109	6,828,303	6,911,412	4,753,783
Expenditure					
Expenditure on raising funds:					
Support costs	**7**	523,793	–	523,793	541,711
Expenditure on charitable activities	**8,9**	–	6,068,141	6,068,141	3,944,894
Central administration and management costs	**10**	(572,892)	–	(572,892)	(477,033)
Total expenditure		(49,099)	6,068,141	6,019,042	4,009,572
Net gains/losses on investments	**11**	9,852	15,325	25,177	194,006
Net income and net movement in funds		142,060	775,487	917,547	938,217
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		1,029,701	2,796,790	3,826,491	2,888,274
Total funds carried forward		1,171,761	3,572,277	4,744,038	3,826,491

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 33 to 43 form part of these financial statements.

Action Together CIO

Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	**16**	171,176	171,007
Investments	**17**	1,368,754	1,320,953
		1,539,930	1,491,960
Current assets			
Debtors	**18**	289,944	174,166
Cash at bank and in hand		3,067,363	2,693,600
		3,357,307	2,867,766
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**19**	153,199	533,235
Net current assets		3,204,108	2,334,531
Total assets less current liabilities		4,744,038	3,826,491
Net assets		4,744,038	3,826,491
Funds of the charity			
Restricted funds		3,572,277	2,796,790
Unrestricted funds		1,171,761	1,029,701
Total charity funds	**21**	4,744,038	3,826,491

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on January 26th 2023, and are signed on behalf of the board by:



C. Guereca
Trustee



A. Parkes
Trustee

The notes on pages 33 to 43 form part of these financial statements.

Action Together CIO

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended 31 March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income	917,547	938,217
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	12,766	11,540
Net gains/losses on investments	(25,177)	(194,006)
Other interest receivable and similar income	(5,603)	(6,761)
Accrued (income)/expenses	(65,727)	78,264
Changes in:		
Trade and other debtors	(115,778)	(78,176)
Trade and other creditors	(314,309)	265,265
Cash generated from operations	403,719	1,014,343
Interest received	5,603	6,761
Net cash from operating activities	409,322	1,021,104
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(12,935)	(14,203)
Purchases of other investments	(24,563)	(2,647)
Proceeds from sale of other investments	1,939	2,187
Net cash used in investing activities	(35,559)	(14,663)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	373,763	1,006,441
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	2,693,600	1,687,159
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	3,067,363	2,693,600

The notes on pages 33 to 43 form part of these financial statements.

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is 95-97 Penny Meadow, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 6EP.

2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

3. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

Incoming resources

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity, it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.

3. Accounting policies ***(continued)***

Incoming resources ***(continued)***

- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it will be regarded as restricted.

- receipts received during the year which are not to be expended until after the balance sheet date are not recognised as income for the year and are included in income deferred (note 19).

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities.

- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

Tangible assets

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	-	25% straight line
Motor vehicles	-	25% straight line
Equipment	-	25% straight line

The fair value of freehold property will be reviewed on an annual basis.

3. Accounting policies ***(continued)***

Investments

Unlisted equity investments are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently measured at fair value. If fair value cannot be reliably measured, assets are measured at cost less impairment.

Listed investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value being recognised in income or expenditure.

Impairment of fixed assets

A review for indicators of impairment is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

For the purposes of impairment testing, when it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, an estimate is made of the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. The cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group of assets that includes the asset and generates cash inflows that largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets.

Debtors

Short-term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Prepayments are recognised for all expenditure incurred for future periods.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised where there is a present obligation resulting from a past event that will result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due can be measured reliably.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash or cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and cash in hand.

3. Accounting policies ***(continued)***

Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Where investments in shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in income and expenditure. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised under the appropriate heading in the statement of financial activities in which the initial gain was recognised.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

Defined contribution plans

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense in the period in which the related service is provided. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that the prepayment will lead to a reduction in future payments or a cash refund.

When contributions are not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the end of the reporting date in which the employees render the related service, the liability is measured on a discounted present value basis. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as an expense in the period in which it arises.

4. Funded charitable activities

	Restricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Grants				
Core Infrastructure	990,098	990,098	1,050,024	1,050,024
Healthwatch	301,806	301,806	307,653	307,653
Grants and investments in the VCFSE	3,811,979	3,811,979	1,902,089	1,902,089
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,591,738	1,591,738	1,140,363	1,140,363
LTO	566	566	–	–
Big Local	–	–	105,525	105,525
Other projects and consultancy	132,116	132,116	185,502	185,502
	6,828,303	6,828,303	4,691,156	4,691,156

5. Activities for generating funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Activities for generating funds	77,506	77,506	25,196	25,196
Lloyds core activity grant	–	–	30,000	30,000
Miscellaneous	–	–	670	670
	77,506	77,506	55,866	55,866

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Bank interest	692	692	1,291	1,291
Dividends	4,911	4,911	5,470	5,470
	5,603	5,603	6,761	6,761

In addition income on investments held within the Action Oldham Fund and the Tameside 4 Good Fund have been included in the income of those funds:-

	2022 **£**	2021 £
Bank interest and dividends	26,010	24,076

7. Support costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Management and administration costs	523,793	523,793	541,711	541,711

7. Support costs *(continued)*

	2022	2021
	£	£
Staff costs	399,937	371,995
Premises and office costs	96,306	144,371
Irrecoverable Vat	12,938	11,934
Investment income management fees	1,846	1,870
Depreciation	12,766	11,541
	523,793	541,711

Premises and office costs include audit fees £7,750 (2021 : £7,750).

8. Expenditure on charitable activities by fund type

	Restricted Funds	**Total Funds 2022**	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2021
	£	**£**	£	£
Core Infrastructure	776,893	776,893	728,189	728,189
Healthwatch	248,282	248,282	227,743	227,743
Grants and investments in VCFSE	2,766,702	2,766,702	1,305,012	1,305,012
Social Prescribing/Community Wellbeing	1,484,698	1,484,698	994,154	994,154
Big Local	–	–	40,372	40,372
LTO	82,492	82,492	–	–
Other projects and consultancy	136,182	136,182	172,390	172,390
Support costs	572,892	572,892	477,034	477,034
	6,068,141	6,068,141	3,944,894	3,944,894

9. Expenditure on charitable activities by activity type

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	**Total funds 2022**	Total fund 2021
	£	£	**£**	£
Core Infrastructure	776,893	141,113	918,006	960,174
Healthwatch	248,282	73,750	322,032	301,097
Grants and investments in VCFSE	2,766,702	126,274	2,892,976	1,356,745
Social Prescribing/Community Wellbeing	1,484,698	145,772	1,630,470	1,097,373
Big Local	–	–	–	49,539
LTO	82,492	11,900	94,392	–
Other projects and consultancy	136,182	74,083	210,265	179,966
	5,495,249	572,892	6,068,141	3,944,894

Details of grants made are included on our website at https:www.actiontogether.org.uk

10. Central administration and management costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Costs recovered from administration and management of restricted funds	(572,892)	(572,892)	(477,033)	(477,033)

11. Net gains/losses on investments

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**
Gains/(losses) on listed investments	9,852	15,325	25,177

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Gains/(losses) on listed investments	65,859	128,147	194,006

12. Net income

Net income is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2022 £	2021 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	12,766	11,540

13. Staff costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	1,807,799	1,896,817
Social security costs	180,841	167,716
Employer contributions to pension plans	112,696	104,401
	2,101,336	2,168,934

The average head count of employees during the year was 84 (2021: 73). The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year is analysed as follows:

	2022 No.	2021 No.
Direct charitable activities	73	62
Office and administration	11	11
	84	73

The number of employees whose remuneration for the year fell within the following bands, were:

	2022 No.	2021 No.
£60,000 to £69,999	1	1

13. Staff costs *(continued)*

Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel include all persons that have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. The total compensation paid to key management personnel for services provided to the charity was £136,333 (2021:£133,442).

14. Trustee remuneration and expenses

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year.

15. Volunteers

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies and roles. Residents of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside can register with our volunteer brokerage service, and we will match them with local volunteering opportunities.

In the last year 1,508 people registered to volunteer with Action Together, and 1,332 found roles actively volunteering in their communities. We developed a place-based volunteering brokerage model, building on our learnings from the pandemic to meet and match people with local volunteer opportunities in their area. Action Together volunteer roles included supporting vaccination clinics, Community Champions engaging with people in their areas around Covid, doorstep donation and collection schemes, and supporting humanitarian aid, food access and poverty relief.

16. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Equipment £	**Total £**
Cost					
At 1 April 2021	150,000	39,080	24,299	24,704	238,083
Additions	–	–	–	12,935	12,935
Disposals	–	(30,080)	–	–	(30,080)
At 31 March 2022	150,000	9,000	24,299	37,639	220,938
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2021	–	30,632	24,299	12,145	67,076
Charge for the year	–	4,695	–	8,071	12,766
Disposals	–	(30,080)	–	–	(30,080)
At 31 March 2022	–	5,247	24,299	20,216	49,762
Carrying amount					
At 31 March 2022	150,000	3,753	–	17,423	171,176
At 31 March 2021	150,000	8,448	–	12,559	171,007

The charity acquired the freehold property at a value of £150,000 (based on a professional valuation in 2017) when the charity was formed from the merger of Voluntary Action Oldham and Community Voluntary Action Tameside.

17. Investments

	Listed investments £	Other investments £	**Total £**
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2021	1,298,140	22,813	1,320,953
Additions	24,563	–	24,563
Disposals	–	(1,939)	(1,939)
Fair value movements	25,177	–	25,177
At 31 March 2022	1,347,880	20,874	1,368,754
Impairment			
At 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022		–	–
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2022	1,347,880	20,874	1,368,754
At 31 March 2021	1,298,140	22,813	1,320,953

All investments shown above are held at valuation.

Financial assets held at fair value

All listed investments are held in the United Kingdom and are incorporated at fair value at March 31, 2022.

18. Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Accounts receivable	270,975	160,483
Prepayments	17,404	8,551
Other debtors	1,565	5,132
	289,944	174,166

19. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Amounts payable	4,147	7,875
Accruals	55,764	121,491
Social security and other taxes	58,288	88,669
Income deferred	35,000	315,200
	153,199	533,235

Income deferred is explained in the Accounting Policies under Incoming resources.

The movements are as follows:	
Deferred income brought forward	315,200
Resources deferred during the year	20,000
Amounts released from previous years	(300,200)
Deferred income carried forward	35,000

20. Pensions and other post retirement benefits

Defined contribution plans

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £112,696 (2021: £104,401).

21. Analysis of charitable funds

Unrestricted funds

	At 1 Apr 2021	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains and losses	**At 31 Mar 2022**
	£	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	952,701	83,109	49,099	(13,487)	9,852	1,081,274
Designated Fund	77,000	–	–	13,487	–	90,487
	1,029,701	83,109	49,099	-	9,852	1,171,761

	At 1 Apr 2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains and losses	At 31 Mar 2021
	£	£	£	£	£	£
General funds	965,893	62,627	(64,678)	(77,000)	65,859	952,701
Designated Fund	–	–	–	77,000	–	77,000
	965,893	62,627	(64,678)	–	65,859	1,029,701

Restricted funds

	At 1 Apr 2021	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains and losses	**At 31 Mar 2022**
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct charitable activities	2,796,790	6,828,303	(6,068,141)	–	15,325	3,572,277

	At 1 Apr 2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains and losses	At 31 Mar 2021
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Direct charitable activities	1,922,381	4,691,155	(3,944,893)	–	128,147	2,796,790

22. Related parties

There are no related party transactions.

23. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2022 £**
Tangible fixed assets	171,176	–	171,176
Investments	354,857	1,013,897	1,368,754
Current assets	763,927	2,593,380	3,357,307
Creditors less than 1 year	(118,199)	(35,000)	(153,199)
Net assets	1,171,761	3,572,277	4,744,038

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	171,007	–	171,007
Investments	368,427	952,526	1,320,953
Current assets	708,302	2,159,464	2,867,766
Creditors less than 1 year	(218,035)	(315,200)	(533,235)
Net assets	1,029,701	2,796,790	3,826,491

24. Going concern

The Trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity projections, cash flows and reserves as well as the aftermath of the Covid pandemic and its impact on the organisation and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 Apr 2021 £	Cash flows £	**At 31 Mar 2022 £**
Cash at bank and in hand	2,693,600	373,763	3,067,363

ACTION TOGETHER CIO

England & Wales - Charity number 1165512

Accounts

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1165512

Action Together CIO

Financial Statements

31 March 2021

JOHN ALDERDICE & SONS T/A THE BAILEY GROUP
Chartered Accountants& statutory auditor
30 Yoden Way
Peterlee
Co. Durham
SR8 1AL

Action Together CIO

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2021

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Action Together CIO

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 March 2021

The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Forward from our Chair

I am proud to introduce the Trustee Report for Action Together on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

I want to begin by recognising the amazing work of the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise sector, and thank them for their solidarity and practical responses to care for one another throughout this unprecedented year.

It has been an honour to witness the sheer number of people volunteering, helping their neighbours, and making a difference in someone else's life. An incredible 2,175 volunteers registered with Action Together in the period covered in this report, all wanting to help others and be part of the response to COVID, with over half that number volunteering directly with Action Together. Whether delivering essential PPE, shopping for a neighbour, collecting donations safely from people's doorsteps, or helping in a foodbank - every volunteer has made a difference in our communities.

It's also been incredible to see the strength and connectedness across the VCSFE sector, with organisations pulling together, adapting their offers and responding to what our communities needed, when they were needed most. The drive of our members is what kept them going through the ups and downs of last year. On behalf of everyone at Action Together we want to thank you.

As Chair I'd also like to thank the staff, volunteers and fellow board members of Action Together. They too have adapted quickly to the significant numbers of asks and different ways of working that was expected of us throughout the pandemic. I know from the feedback we have received that they have been a help to so many people and organisations.

Also on a personal note, I'd like to say a few words about my time at Action Together. It is with sadness that I will be retiring as the Chair this year. I have been Chair of Action Together since its inception in 2016, and was a trustee of CVAT for many years before that. Being Chair of an organisation like Action Together has been a matter of real pride to me.

I have been deeply moved by the values that we have developed together with Action Together staff, and am assured that my fellow trustees, staff and the new Chair will continue the work of aligning organisational structures, policies and procedures to the values that we espouse, so that everything we do reflects our organisational DNA: " Believe It's Possible " Strengthen Others" Be True

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Action Together across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside during my time on the Board.

Revd Roger Farnworth

About us: Our purpose, values and strategic objectives

Our purpose and charitable objects

'To strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, maximising opportunities to create positive social change, promote social justice and harness social benefit.'

Our charitable objects are to;

- promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government areas of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and the surrounding area and, in particular, to build the capacity of third sector organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.

- promote, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

Our mission is to strengthen the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, increase individual social action, and work across organisational and sector boundaries to maximise every opportunity to harness social good and create social change.

There are an estimated 3788 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside according to our 2020 State of the Sector research.

Public Benefit - how we decide who to help

We make decisions in line with the Public Benefit guidance (2014) and ensure;

- Decisions are taken in line with our charitable objects

- That we adhere to our values in the decision we take

- We prioritise our services to help those that would be unable to pay for the support and / or who are tackling a significant social injustice

- We identify and minimise risks

- There is no personal benefit (or advantage) given to trustees or staff

We will address the work we have done to meet our charitable objects and public benefit throughout the Activities and Impact section of this report.

Our values

Our values underpin all our activities including our strategy, operational plan, workforce development and recruitment. We want to be held to account on our values, as ways of working that we will always strive for.

Believe it's possible - vision and ideas matter. We have confidence in the power of people and communities and strive to release their potential to create the widest possible benefits whilst promoting social justice;

Strengthen others - we work in ways that strengthen people, places, and partnerships. We achieve this by working collaboratively, sharing skills, and developing relationships between people, groups and agencies;

Be true - we are brave enough to share constructive insight to make progress. Our unique insight comes from our connections with, and amplification of, the diverse range of voices of people and groups that we work with.

Our strategic objectives

We adapted and expanded our strategic objectives this year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. These objectives will be maintained from 2020 - 2023 and form a core part of our work.

Action Together Strategic Objectives 2020-23	How will we achieve this?
Be active in the COVID crisis response, protect and support the VCFSE as it provides vital support and faces unprecedented financial challenges.	• Be an active part of the local emergency response to COVID, mobilising volunteers, securing resources, and facilitating connections to ensure the VCFSE can provide their vital role. • Lobby for, provide practical support and financial assistance for parts of the VCFSE that are most vulnerable. • Be a named partner (as a conduit to the VCSFE) in established emergency response structures and processes in each locality.
Design out inequality and poverty	• Inequality and poverty will not be eradicated unless we design it out. We must keep working on solutions and act for those experiencing hardship now. We must also work on longer term solutions including developing new economic models that help to address inequality and poverty.
Embrace digital technology but tackle digital exclusion and unequal access	• We will also work to increase the capacity and access to digital development with the local VCSFE. • We must work with others to tackle digital exclusion and develop initiatives to ensure fair access.
Be greener and tackle the climate emergency	• We must build new alliances and partnerships to increase joint action that tackles climate change. Our work must start within Action Together and ensure this is factored into our everyday decision making on design and delivery of our services, procurement and training for staff and volunteers.

More people involved in changing parts of the system that aren't working	• We will increase the scale of our collaborative action on system change, co-design, and coproduction. We will deliver new projects and develop approaches that demonstrate the power of working in this way to achieve positive social change. We will particularly focus on the experience and insight from those people often not involved in decision making.
Work more closely with our membership and those that most need our support	• We will actively promote membership and define the benefits, offer and ask for our members. We must apportion our resources and help where it is most needed and be able to flex our offer to suit what our members want from us.
Increase influence at GM that benefits local people and members.	• We will strengthen our work with 10GM through more formal working arrangements with 10GM partners. By increased representation and GM networking we will be able to identify work strands in which we should take a more active lead and which will benefit our members.
Work smarter and create more impact	• We will amend our structure and ways of working to ensure we can be active in neighbourhood working models and ensure the VCFSE are also directly plugged in to these. • We will develop our skills in impact and storytelling and develop new process and approaches to provide impact evidence more systematically.
A happier workforce committed to our values and ongoing development and learning.	• We will continue to develop our commitment to our values and increase clarity on the behaviours that underpin these. • We will keep learning from our staff teams and volunteers; responding directly to staff satisfaction surveys and insight and create ways of working that shares power and decision making. • Develop new partnerships and opportunities for all our workforce to continue to learn and develop innovation and find inspiration from others.

Structure, governance and management

Governance

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Action Together and is ultimately responsible for everything the incorporated charitable does. Action Together's board can have a maximum of 14 Board members, 12 of which are elected from its membership, with the ability to co-opt a further 2 people.

We have a quarterly sub-group that provides additional oversight and scrutiny on Action Together's finances. Other thematic sub-groups are set up as they are required e.g. premises; HR; strategy. Action Together has two standing committees that steer the work of Healthwatch Oldham and Healthwatch Tameside. These have their own terms of reference but ultimate accountability of the contracts and employment is with Action Together.

Action Together honorary officers are:
Chair - Revd Roger Farnworth
Deputy Chair - Adrian Ball
Treasurer - Anne Parkes

A full list of the trustees can be found at http://www.actiontogether.org.uk/our-trustees

Board members are supported in their role by receiving an induction, and are offered support from the CEO and from other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to take up training and development opportunities, from the training we run but also on external training that is of interest.

Following the end of this financial year, our Chair Revd Roger Farnworth will step down from his role and leave the board. Roger has been the Chair of Action Together since we formed in 2016 and was an active member of T3SC Board for over 10 years before it. Roger will be missed by Action Together and in his work across Tameside, and alongside being our Chair we would like to thank him for being a great supporter of our charity and wish him the best of luck for the future. Roger will continue to hold the role of Chair for our 2021 AGM but will step down following the meeting. Our Board plans to elect the Honorary Officer positions at the first Board Meeting after the AGM.

Structure and management

The day to day running of the charity is handled through a scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive, Liz Windsor-Welsh. The Chief Executive leads the Senior Leadership Team, which consists of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Operations, and the three Senior Locality Leads responsible for the management of our three locality teams in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

We had a team which averaged a headcount of 74 people. Although defined as a key worker employer, we did not furlough staff under the government furlough scheme.

Last year we had an office in each of the areas we support:

- Oldham - 12 Manchester Chambers, Oldham, OL1 1LF
- Rochdale - 104-106 Drake St, Rochdale, OL16 1PQ
- Tameside - 95-97 Penny Meadow, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 6EP

Following COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, we temporarily closed our offices and moved to a distance-working model, with staff based at home. A limited number of staff were based in our Oldham office, following social distancing regulations, but all offices were closed to the public. After the close of FY 2020/21 we took the decision to leave our Rochdale office, and now maintain two offices in Oldham and Tameside as we look to develop a hybrid working model in FY 2021/22.

We continued to play a key part in 10GM, the joint venture to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester. Action Together represent three of the boroughs and remain committed to working with our colleagues at Bolton CVS, Salford CVS, MACC and associates of other boroughs in order to achieve our charitable objects. We worked with 10GM, partners from Greater Manchester public bodies and academic partners at the University of Salford to complete the State of the Sector research in 2020/21. The full State of the Sector report will follow in FY 2021/22.

Our Systems

Our operating systems and processes continue to evolve to ensure that we are compliant with legislation, improve our efficiency and productivity, and offering an easily accessible service to all members of the community.

We have closely followed COVID-19 rules and restrictions as they developed over the course of the pandemic. Before the first lockdown, we ensured hand sanitiser and signage was available in the offices. Following the closure of workplaces, we reviewed our working methods to support staff working from home. Our previous work developing new systems and processes in FY 2019/20 meant we had tools in place to transition to distance working, particularly in our use of Microsoft Teams, the new 3CX phone system, and our new local IT supplier Remedian.

We have a number of staff groups to address internal and external processes and systems. These thematic groups are cross-locality and membership is open to all staff members on a voluntary basis. The group topics link with our strategic objectives:

- Membership
  - Developing our Membership offer and process

- Tech
  - Share knowledge and best practice and identify solutions in relation to the use of IT across all organisation workstreams.

  - Identify software solutions and approaches to improve efficiency, data sharing, communications and impact information

- Training
  - Developing our training offer for members

- Staff Wellbeing
  - Looking at issues around staff wellbeing and providing a forum for ideas and feedback from staff

A key strategic priority for Action Together is to get more people involved in changing parts of the system that aren't working. Alongside strengthening the VCFSE sector, our role as an infrastructure organisation is to address the root causes of inequality and poverty in our communities.

To help us to achieve this, we designed the Engagement and System Change Manager role to help us develop the internal skills and external capacity to identify opportunities and work towards positive social change. Our new System Change Managers, Maddy and Robbie, work with our strategic partners from across sectors to identify the opportunities and secure the resources to create system change work, with meaningful engagement and design from local people and the VCFSE. They also work internally to collect and share learning and develop our internal confidence and capabilities to engage in system change work.

Examples of system change work include:

- Action learning/reflective practice sets for our Officers

- Virtual facilitation toolkit for our members, including how to use Zoom and other tools

- Involvement in creation of Oldham Poverty Truth Commission

- Social prescribing induction process

- Development of our insight collecting tools and capabilities

We have continued to develop https://www.actiontogether.org.uk for our members, improving our Community Activity Directory, Find Funding page, and navigation. Our website saw a big increase in visits, with a total of 569,323 hits across the site. Our most popular pages were Find Funding, Volunteering, and COVID information. In the coming year, we plan to further develop our website including further improving navigation and developing our most popular pages.

We continue to ensure we are compliant with GDPR data protection, through our Data Protection Officer, and the latest employment legislation.

Risk management

All risks are identified and logged in a central file. All risks are escalated to the CEO and action taken according to the individual risk. Any risks that need to be escalated to the Board is done through email/phone if an immediate decision is required or through the quarterly board papers. All complex projects have a risk plan as part of the project initiation process.

Activities and Impact



We continue to organise the work we do around core central themes. As we're dedicated to addressing the individual needs of each borough, our services in the three localities may differ depending on the need of that area, but the matrix structure standardises these services. The matrix helps clarify our offer both to members and our staff.

Throughout the pandemic, we have benefitted from increased cross-locality working around these core themes. Our Volunteering, Development and Investment teams in each locality have worked closely together to respond to the changing needs of our members and develop our service offer. This has helped make our offer more consistent across the localities, as we standardised processes and services such as volunteer registration, training and funding applications. Digital working has had a benefit in helping staff from different localities meet more regularly, and we plan to develop this further in FY 2021/22.

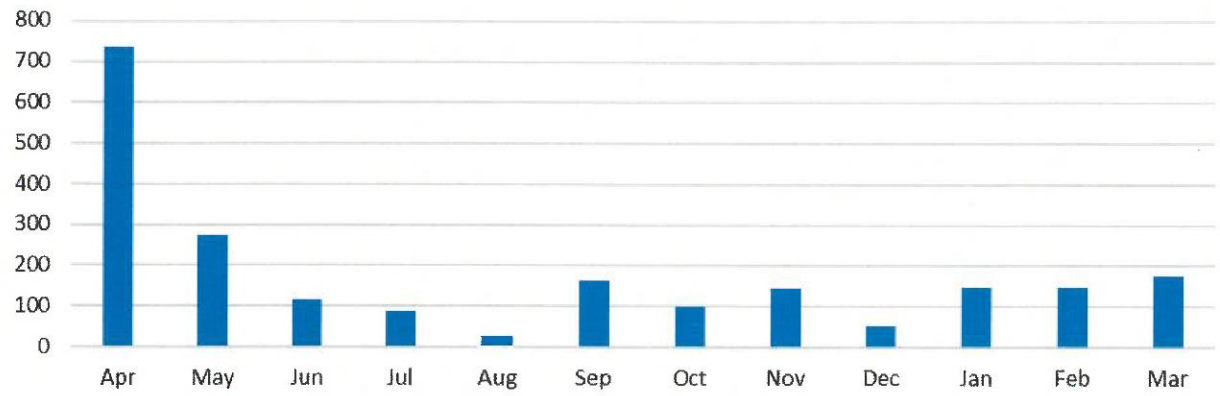
The following pages feature highlights of our activities and impact over the last year, categorised under our core themes. In addition, we continued to operate our Healthwatch Oldham and Healthwatch Tameside services, Miles of Smiles community transport service, and Social Prescribing in Oldham and Tameside, which are included in the Partnerships section.



- **2,175 volunteers registered**
- **91% matched with volunteering opportunities (1,972)**
- **1,051 people volunteered directly with Action Together**

When the COVID lockdown was announced in late March 2020 we immediately **repurposed our Volunteering page to register Emergency Response Volunteers** (https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/volunteering). We had an incredible response to the call for volunteers, with 1,127 people registering through our website in the first quarter alone. This is in addition to 440 people registering at the end of March following the initial lockdown. For comparison, these figures are higher than the number we would normally register in a year.

We **established an emergency volunteering framework** for Action Together, putting in place the necessary new structures, risk management and internal processes to enable us to respond and manage emergency volunteers. With this in place we can use the same model for future emergency responses. The response of our Volunteering teams meant we were able to respond to the public outpouring of help and support, and our position as recognised volunteer brokerage service in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside helped us connect volunteers with public sector partners and community organisations looking for support.



The above graph demonstrates the high number of new people who registered to volunteer with Action Together during the initial lockdown in April 2020. This gave us a bank of volunteers who were then placed in roles in the following months.

Volunteer availability became an issue as furlough support ended and volunteers began returning to work. This also impacted on the number of new volunteers registering, as did the loosening of restrictions in the summer. However, we're pleased that the number of new and active volunteers maintained a steady rate through the second half of the year.

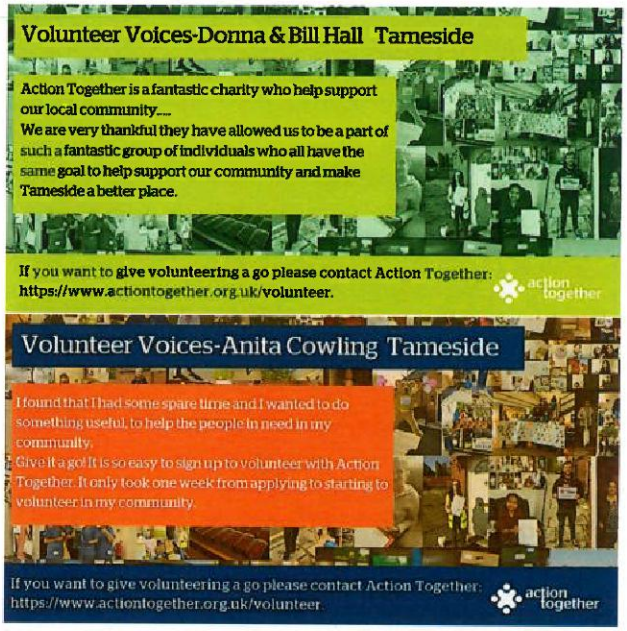
Not all registered volunteers were able to formally take up a role through Action Together. Some volunteers were in shielded groups themselves, and there were not always as many volunteer roles as volunteers registered. In total, **1,051 people volunteered directly with Action Together**, in a variety of roles including our doorstep donation schemes, delivery of PPE, Community Warehouse and community hubs, and in test and trace and vaccination support. This is a huge rise in the number of volunteers we have worked with in other years, and our Volunteer team worked incredibly hard to work with our volunteers and place them in the roles where they were most needed.

Our locality teams worked to engage all our registered volunteers more permanently by communicating directly and regularly with them to share volunteer opportunities. We also created **local volunteer community Facebook groups and introduced regular Volunteer Ebulletins** to promote local volunteering opportunities. This has helped us reach members of the public who may not otherwise have considered volunteering and created a sense of community around volunteering, as well as a new audience for Action Together's work. It also helped us assign volunteers quickly to short notice requests for support, such as in Rochdale, where we connected the Middleton Co-operative Partnership with six volunteers from the area within two days, or supported Rochdale Council by identifying a volunteer on the same day as an urgent request to assist a resident in Littleborough with shopping. In Tameside, we brokered 20 volunteers to a new soup kitchen in Ridgehill to help prepare and deliver food in the community.

Our teams responded to changing volunteer demands and the reduction in public travel by adapting the brokerage service to identify more hyper-local, informal volunteer roles at a neighbourhood level, such as litter picks and local clear ups.

In response to requests from some of our larger local charities, who saw a decline in volunteers since the pandemic, we launched the popular **Meet the Charities** events to help with volunteer recruitment. At these online sessions potential volunteers can speak to Volunteer Managers to learn more about what their VCFSE group does, what volunteer roles they offer, and how volunteers can get involved. We record these sessions and host them on our YouTube channel so volunteers can find out about local charities even if they don't attend the original event.

We also began sharing **Volunteer Voice stories** from people volunteering with us in lockdown, with the aim of promoting volunteering to others on social media:



Our Volunteer and Development teams in all three localities began meeting weekly on Zoom as a combined team to share knowledge, address issues, and respond quickly to COVID. This has been effective in standardising our processes and co-ordinating work across the localities.

One key learning was that our **easy sign-up process** for emergency response volunteering was very effective, with fewer barriers to entry meaning more people could get involved in volunteering. We worked closely with GMCVO to scope and design a new, easier process and registration platform on our website. We combined this with improvements in the registration journey, including improving the process to register for a role on the website, and the communications volunteers receive. There is now one combined process for all volunteer registrations, which meets our requirements in gathering key information from new volunteers, while making the process simpler and easier to complete.

Mutual Aid

Alongside the influx of new volunteers through our emergency response process, we also saw a number of new mutual aid groups appearing across the three localities. Our teams worked to map out the new groups in their areas, and while we did not register volunteers for the unconstituted groups, we **offered assistance and produced guidance** for the groups.

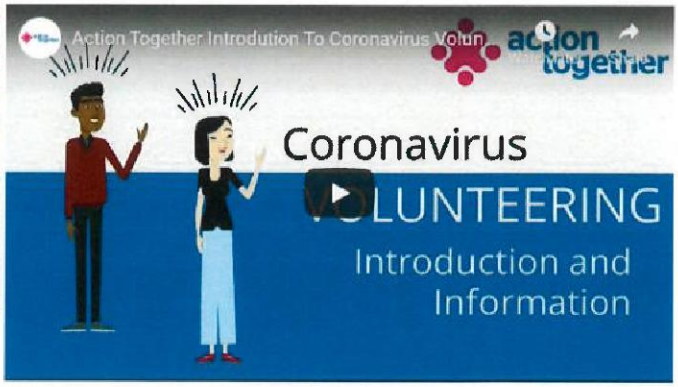
We created a mutual aid guide (https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/mutual-aid) early in lockdown at a time when advice and guidance was limited. This page became one of the **top three national results on Google** for mutual aid searches and gained 7,689 hits across the year, just under half of which came in April 2020. A number of the mutual aid groups have now developed into longer-term concerns with assistance from our Development teams.

Community Hubs

We were active in the development and delivery of emergency responses through neighbourhood **Community Hubs** set up across localities. We developed volunteering roles, new volunteering job descriptions with accompanying risk assessments, and in many cases managed the volunteers in their new roles. This included producing training including the creation of a video induction for volunteers:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDxvw2ijRL4

Angela Rayner MP visited a Community Hub in Droylsden to meet with Action Together staff and volunteers. The MP for Ashton-Under-Lyne said, "the past few months have been incredibly difficult for some people, especially those who have been shielding or those with little support. It was so wonderful to meet with these incredible volunteers who have given their time to make sure the most vulnerable members of our community are getting the help they need." The visit received press coverage including in the Oldham Chronicle.





Foodbanks

In Tameside, our team helped address the decline in foodbank donations in lockdown by using **volunteers to collect donations door-to-door**. The team's work developing place-based teams and knowledge across the borough helped facilitate teams of neighbourhood volunteers to support local foodbanks.

The team created leaflets which volunteers delivered, and volunteers returned on a specified date to collect donations outside the door. At the end of Q1, we had collected an amazing 1,454 bags of food for Tameside foodbanks.

In Oldham, we worked extensively to support the local foodbank. Our Emergency Response Volunteers supported the delivery of the humanitarian aid offer, working closely with Oldham Foodbank. **We managed around 100 volunteers each week in Oldham Foodbank** in a range of roles from collecting food donations, to picking and packing food packages, to delivering to the door for residents. Our Oldham Social Prescribing Manager provided management capacity support to the Oldham Foodbank through the year, managing the operational delivery lead development work with the charity's trustees and successfully securing grant investment for ongoing management capacity.

Test and Trace/Vaccination Support

Towards the end of the year, we worked with local partners to deploy **volunteers to support test and trace** work, including at testing centres. This was later followed by supporting the vaccination roll out in Q4.

We developed new volunteering roles to support Oldham's Vaccination roll-out and have specifically been **supporting the community based 'pop-up' vaccination clinics** in mosques and community centres. We co-ordinated 81 volunteers to support 13 community 'pop-ups' in the last 3 months of the year, alongside support for public messaging around the vaccination. Our members were also key in getting the message about test and trace and vaccinations out to communities.

At the start of the pandemic, we wanted to offer an opportunity for people looking to volunteer to get involved in the crisis response in Oldham. There was a huge outpouring of public interest in volunteering, as well as a new potential audience due to the high number of people on furlough from their workplace. Due to our role as the recognised volunteer centre for Oldham Borough, we quickly moved to provide an outlet for people who wanted to help.

Spotlight on... Oldham Emergency Response Volunteering



We developed a volunteer recruitment pathway, new systems and processes, and emergency response volunteer roles. This would help us respond to the many people visiting our website and contacting us and help quickly recruit local people to be able to help with the crisis response. We also put in place measures, working closely with our public health partners to ensure the safety of our volunteers and the people they were helping.

Having drawn up our plans, we quickly set up a new online recruitment process and training package and worked with Oldham's community response system to identify where volunteering capacity was needed. This was initially in the Oldham Foodbank and Food Distribution Hubs, who had seen a fall in volunteer numbers due to shielding restrictions. As the pandemic went on, the need grew to include mobilising volunteers to support with doorstep engagement around public health and COVID messaging, promoting test and trace, supporting the testing programme, and at the end of the year supporting community vaccination clinics.

Across the year we recruited and supported 853 local volunteers in Oldham to become part of the pandemic response, with around 150 active volunteers deployed each month. These volunteers were an essential part of the response to COVID, and we're grateful to everyone who came forward and volunteered to help in communities across Oldham.



Spotlight on... Volunteering in Rochdale

Our Rochdale team have highlighted two of their volunteers in the borough:



"Action Together recruit volunteers from far and wide across the borough and come into contact with many dedicated and passionate people who want to give something back to the community - none more so than husband and wife duo Gwen and Andy Eckersley. During the pandemic Gwen and Andy offered their service to help support Emergency Food Parcels across the borough, but their help did not stop there. They then put themselves forward to support the Community Warehouse that is set up to offer a more sustainable food crisis provision for the borough.

Task

Every month Gwen and Andy have dedicated many hours to support the much-needed day-to-day tasks of the Community Warehouse. This includes picking and packing orders, ensuring food delivered and donated is put on shelves, checking dates on stock and rotating as required, support with general cleanliness of the warehouse, and help promoting the Warehouse in general. Nothing is too much trouble for them and there's nothing they wouldn't do - if they get asked, they do it. No questions, they just help!!

Without this much needed support the Community Warehouse would not be where it is today, with a great system for getting much needed food out to the community or be as organised as it is. Gwen is also passionate about recycling so every single carrier bag or box that is used at the Warehouse is recycled and used again. They support other volunteers and ensure the camaraderie amongst the team is always happy and the Warehouse is a great place to volunteer.

Gwen and Andy are a truly amazing couple who have dedicated over 20 hours a month to the Community Warehouse and ensured its success. Our hidden HEROES!"

action together

COMMUNITY WAREHOUSE

#TogetherRochdale

DEVELOPMENT

- **Formally supported 1,093 groups to develop,** with indirect or informal support to many more
- **1,728 people attended our training and events activities,** all hosted online

Early in the first lockdown our Development teams and wider Community Development workforce **contacted our members and the wider local VSCFSE sector to understand the impact** both on service provision and finances. We produced and released a survey to provide evidence to lobby locally for increased resources and ensure we were responding to our members' needs.

We postponed all training and events and began to develop remote **online training.**

Alongside this, we **reviewed the navigation of our website to foreground information about COVID.** We created a central page (https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/covid-19) to collate information for individuals looking to volunteer, donate, or find support, and for groups looking for volunteers, funding, or advice. The page also included links to government, council, NHS and public health information. We added resources including risk assessments to help our members adapt to the restrictions.

As lockdown progressed and information between the three localities began to diverge, we **created locality COVID pages** for more localised information and advice.

Alongside Volunteering staff, **Development teams from all three localities began to meet weekly** on Microsoft Teams to co-ordinate our collective response to the pandemic. This was hugely beneficial in standardising our processes and sharing learnings from each locality. The team developed a very effective way of working together to quickly respond to changing restrictions. By sharing knowledge and communications, they developed advice and guidance relevant to all three boroughs. This has made information across the localities easier to find for our members.

The team conducted extensive work on developing **guidance to help groups interpret COVID restrictions** when the local Tier 2 and 3 rules were introduced in the summer.

In support of this we introduced **weekly Reopening drop-in sessions on Zoom**. Sessions were to support groups and owners of buildings thinking of reopening or restarting events. These drop-ins developed to take a wider focus on COVID, where we shared the latest advice and guidance, and groups offered peer-to-peer support to each other across localities. The sessions also helped us collect information and assess the needs of groups each week.

We also created a new Reopening page on our website specifically for the latest information, advice and resources for groups. This was well received, quickly becoming one of the most popular pages on our site.

As the country moved from the relaxed restrictions of the summer into a tier system and second lockdown, and VCFSE groups had to cease in-person activities, our Reopening advice was no longer as relevant. The team quickly amended and developed the advice to cover all aspects of COVID restrictions, turning the page into a go-to **Advice For Community Groups During COVID hub**. The team developed this according to the different tier levels and lockdown restrictions, meaning when short-notice changes were made to the rules, we could quickly update our advice.

A good indicator of the success of this work is the hits on the Advice for groups page on our website. The page was consistently one of the most visited since launched, with 5,448 hits in the five months since going live in November. **Whenever changes to restrictions were announced, we would see an uplift in visits to the page.** This shows that groups were used to looking for the information from us and were finding it themselves. We're also aware that groups in other parts of the country used the information we've developed, and we often received queries about it through our website.

We introduced a **weekly Action Together ebulletin** to all members, in order to share the latest information and updates. As the year progressed, localities diverged in their responses and more information came to us to share with our members, so we **introduced fortnightly locality ebulletins**. These changes were effective in getting the latest updates, advice, funding opportunities and training to our members, and we continued with this model throughout the year.

In response to the initial survey of our members, and requests for more information on funding and online training, we **introduced fortnightly Funding and Training ebulletins.** These mailouts go to all members across the three localities and include national and local funding opportunities, and internal and external training we recommend to VCFSE groups. This has continued to lead to increased engagement with our funding offer and online training and received good feedback from members for the amount of relevant information we're sharing.

One benefit from the move to online working was the way groups from different localities could attend the same training session, encouraging cross-locality connections and co-working. We capitalised on this by introducing our **#WednesdaysWeekly** Zoom sessions. Each Wednesday there is a session open to all members across localities, with the themes in response to information our members are looking for. The regularity and topics have seen good attendance, and particularly popular were sessions on opening up community facilities safely, retaining volunteers and volunteer wellbeing, and support for bid writing.

We will continue the sessions, and record all #WednesdaysWeeklys so members can watch later on our YouTube channel.

The team used this learning to further develop our existing training offer. Development and Training staff worked together to plan in a **long-term training calendar**, making use of attendance data and feedback to deliver more of the training our members need. The move to online training has meant teams can work together more closely to deliver training across localities, and groups from different areas can come together during these sessions in ways they could not before.

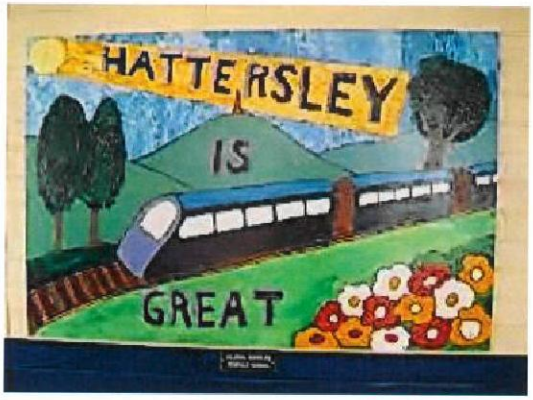
In March we marked a year since the first lockdown with a reflective event. **'Reflecting on COVID-19: Sharing the lessons learnt and moving forward in 2021'** was open to members across the three localities. We adopted a change framework developed by the RSA which attendees were able to work through together to identify what they need to 'Let Go, End, Amplify, and Restart'. This session helped us in focusing on the needs of our members as we move into a new financial year and the next stage of the pandemic, and we developed plans for an early year campaign providing groups with Funding information and further campaigns to help groups reconnect with the volunteers after lockdown.

In Oldham and Tameside, we **developed our place-based offer** throughout the year. The aim of this work was to focus on neighbourhoods within localities, bringing staff together from Volunteering, Development and Social Prescribing to build neighbourhood teams across the boroughs. This work will develop into a fully launched model in the next financial year.

Spotlight on... Community Development in Tameside

Tameside Community Development team have highlighted some of the groups they've worked with this year.

Michaelle shares her experiences of working with Friends of Hattersley Station:



"Friends of Hattersley Station are a volunteer-led group that maintain the green space outside the station. They have raised beds there, and do regular litter picks while spending some quality time outdoors.

In summer 2020, when the lockdown restrictions were eased, Babs, the chair of the group, got in touch as they wanted to use the opportunity for the volunteers to meet again after a long time and to clear the station garden. But due to the pandemic and lockdown, the group of volunteers could not meet, and subsequently they also lost a few volunteers.

Because of this Babs initially got in touch for help to recruit more volunteers to help out on the day. As we were talking to Babs we also identified that they needed support to make sure that the activities the volunteers would do were COVID safe.

We worked with Babs to interpret and understand the government guidelines and how they applied to the activities the volunteers were going to do. We sent Babs COVID safe risk assessment templates to help her with putting together one for the group and activities. We discussed the different planned activities such as litter picking and weeding the raised beds, and talked about what the risks were, how to make them safe and what she could do to mitigate any risks. I also went down to the station garden with Babs where we did a walkthrough of the planned activities in order to test their COVID safe risk assessment. Babs found this very helpful, and thanks to the walkthrough and having a second opinion, she was able to identify parts of planned activities that were not as Covid safe as she thought they were and was able to modify and change that.

Once Babs felt confident about the planned activities and risk assessment, we were able to put a shout out for volunteers to come out on the day to help out. We advertised this on our volunteer page on the website, and on the Tameside Community Volunteers Facebook page. Four people showed interest in coming along on the day, which Babs said was a very successful session. As a result of the volunteer shout out, out of the four volunteers that came on the day, one of them has now become a regular volunteer with Friends of Hattersley Station."

Chris introduces Friends of Tame Valley:

"Friends of Tame Valley are a volunteer-led group that maintain the paths and surrounding areas around the Tame Valley. They do regular litter picks while spending some quality time outdoors with other local volunteers. When the lockdown restrictions were eased, Andrew Gwynne MP, the chair of the group, got in touch with us as they wanted to start a new group to clean up the Tame Valley area.

I worked with the group to formalise them into a friend's group, using our 'Becoming A Friends Group Factsheet', and supported them step-by-step to complete their constitution and set up a bank account. I also worked with them through a risk assessment for their activities, and a COVID risk assessment we produced during lockdown. Once the group was formalised, they held their first AGM, inviting the local community to attend and be part of it.



After the AGM the group had a high number of volunteers who wanted to support the group. Unfortunately, they didn't have enough equipment for the volunteers, so I worked with the group to help them write a bid for an Action Together Microgrant so they could purchase more equipment. They were successful in bidding for £1,000 from us, a great result.

Friends of Tame Valley now have over 100 volunteers signed up and going out regularly over the weekend. They collected over 500 bags of rubbish, making the site cleaner and more friendly for families. The Friends are now looking at introducing group activities, such as coffee mornings and a walking group, to build on their success."

Ammer reflected on his work with Ashton Women's Community Cycling Group:

"A local person called Atchara phoned Action Together with an idea to set up a Women's Community Cycling Group in Ashton to encourage women, especially BAME women, to take up cycling.

Atchara needed support thinking about what she needed to do to make her idea happen, to find likeminded individuals that would help her set up a community group, and to look at what would be the best way to set up a community group.

I supported Atchara to identify her first steps, and once she had likeminded people interested in becoming part of developing a community group, we moved on to looking at the appropriate legal structures.

We very quickly identified that an unincorporated group would be the best place to start. Atchara went away with the information I provided and worked with the new committee to develop their aim and objectives, and we provided feedback to further strengthen their structures. I helped guide them through other areas of the constitution including quorum on meeting, an AGM, and the management committee amongst other things.

The group was named Tameside Women's Community Cycling Group on signing the constitution and aims to promote women's cycling in Tameside and throughout Greater Manchester with learn-to-ride, cycling confidence and bike maintenance sessions as well as group social rides.

The group went on to secure £3,000 start-up funding to purchase bikes and pay for training and other expenses. They have gone on to provide sessions for local Tameside women and have had interest from women from BAME backgrounds. With the help of our Development team, the group also started to identify and build links with local organisations so that they could raise their profile and encourage more people to get involved.

You can find out more and see their upcoming events on their website: https://twccg.org/"



1Photo courtesy TWCCG/Tameside Reporter

PARTNERSHIP

To better promote our networks and the work they do, we launched three new webpages to host **information about the range of networks we facilitate** across the localities. The pages pull together information about what the networks are, when they meet, and how people can get involved:

- Oldham Networks
- Rochdale Networks
- Tameside Networks

COVID

Throughout the year we worked with public sector partners across the three boroughs and in Greater Manchester in the response to COVID. This includes extensive work in Oldham on **community engagement, sharing council communications, promoting test and trace, and guiding our member organisations and the people they work with to available support and information.**

In Oldham we became an active partner at the Strategic Co-ordination Group (Gold), the Tactical Co-ordination Group (Silver) and in a number of the thematic Bronze Groups, Co-lead the Community Bronze, and the Equalities Advisory Board. We continue to work collaboratively in these spaces and influence policy and decision making.

We have continued to provide the strategic representation for the VCFSE across Oldham Partnership and also in the Covid Emergency Response Governance. We provided a significant amount of leadership and operational capacity to developing and delivering the Oldham approach to the community model for delivering pop-up vaccination clinics.

In Rochdale, we contributed to the COVID engagement work at a strategic level and produced a **VCFSE Signposting Sheet.** This pulled together information on Mutual Aid across the borough, connecting them with and signposting to the Emergency Support Hubs. The resource is updated every two weeks and distributed to key partners in the council and VCFSE sector. This has proved an invaluable piece of work, not only in helping groups and organisations understand what great voluntary work is happening across the borough, but also proved invaluable in helping people in terms of signposting to the correct service and need.

The Rochdale **Inclusive Messaging group** includes those who know and understand Black and South Asian communities, organisations that are embedded in communities, or support particular age groups, families or carers. The group benefits from the experience of user led groups, volunteers, disability focused groups and people who work to connect communities and promote cohesion. The group has discussed a range of topics, from the need for COVID-Safety videos in different languages to assessing why an anti-vaccine leaflet might work with different communities.

In Tameside, VSIG met to look at COVID effects and issues. Insights helped identify key Tameside priorities, and these priorities were linked through to our new **Social Infrastructure Funding**, to ensure funding is directed to where it is needed most

We facilitated further VSIG meetings to cover staff resilience support for sector leaders, staff and volunteers, and to cover feedback from Community Anchor organisations.

We also contributed extensively to **community engagement** with COVID messaging, test and trace, and the local vaccination programme through the weekly COVID Diversity Champions meetings and the Tameside Diversity Network. The Diversity Champions developed 100 COVID Champions, including members of the group.

Action Together is the VCFSE representative on the **GM Contain Cell**, a body that is responsible for the interpretation of data and intelligence that makes recommendation on safety measures and targeted action into the GM Strategic Coordination Group.

Foodbanks

Foodbanks saw a number of challenges in lockdown, including a lack of volunteers due to shielding and a fall in donations as venues which hosted donation points closed. Our existing relationships with foodbanks meant we were able to **respond and support** them through these challenges.

Tameside Partnership team worked closely with the Development team to support foodbanks, and we delivered the **door-to-door collection scheme.**

Oldham team supported directly by **operationally managing the work of the foodbank.** The foodbank was temporarily set up at Oldham Community Leisure Centre, and the Oldham team supported with distribution and by securing donations from local businesses.

We **continue to work closely with and support the foodbanks**, including through the provision of volunteers.

Our Partnership networks have also led to further discussions around poverty and food poverty. Our Partnership team supported the **Greater Manchester Poverty Action Poverty Tool Pilot**, which will look at designing a tool for people referring to foodbanks. The tool will help to support people to look into why access to a foodbank is needed and ensure people get the added support they need. The main aim of the project is to maximise people's income by doing benefit checks and supporting with budgeting. We have been ensuring that the right people are involved, attending the working group meetings and

working closely with GMPA. We organised two information sessions for foodbank referrers, with around 20 - 25 people attending. We continue to sit on the working group and ensure that local organisations are involved.

Winter Support

As in previous years, we delivered extensive partnership work through winter. The centre of this was our annual Winter Support campaign.

This year, we split the campaign into **Get Help and Give Help** strands. Get Help pulled together a directory of crisis support and neighbourhood contacts across the three localities. We have received positive feedback from partners and staff, who use the directory themselves to provide support to people in the community.

Give Help combined volunteer registration with our own appeals, and links to key partners such as Oldham or Tameside foodbanks, so members of the public could easily donate and support appeals in their community.

COVID brought new challenges to the usual activity, as VCFSE groups had to reduce the number of events they held over the Christmas period. It also meant activity such as the annual **Tameside Toy Appeal** had to adjust, as in-person donations were limited by business closures, and regular collections were no longer possible.

Tameside team adapted to the challenge by recruiting 64 volunteer 'Doorstep Elves' and 'Sleigh Drivers'. Donations were made via leafletted collections from people's doorsteps, building on prior work we've done during the pandemic to collect doorstep donations. This meant that despite COVID restrictions, the **appeal was our most successful ever, with over 10,000 toys donated, and £3,649 raised** on our JustGiving appeal. Steven Pleasant, Chief Executive of Tameside Council, joined us to collect donations and thank local schoolchildren for their support, which you can watch on our Facebook page.

We also developed our doorstep engagement in the other boroughs, with Rochdale introducing **Street Ambassadors** as part of a partnership with other charitable organisations in the area. The scheme collects food supplies for distribution to local food banks, as well as good condition digital equipment, to be donated to the Digital Tech Library. The Library was created by Action Together in partnership with a group of grassroots organisations, to address digital poverty and exclusion through the pandemic. The partnership is developing a borough-wide tech loaning offer with local Library Services.

Network Highlights

Oldham

Poverty Truth Commission: Set up the Commission, recruited Grassroots Commissioners, held engagement sessions and worked alongside Oldham Council and the Poverty Agenda Group.

Community Explorers Network: Delivered monthly place-based networks across the five neighbourhoods, connecting the sector with partners, and sharing asks, offers, information and insight. The networks are now embedded in the Public Sector Transformation Programme.

Food Solutions Network: Brought together around 40 VCFSE groups and organisations that deliver emergency food and support. The network used its insight to secure £50,000 DEFRA funding, which has been invested in addressing inequalities for people from minority communities. Through the network we ensured there was a February half-term enhanced food offer to families

We also significantly contributed to Oldham partnership work including:

- Oldham VCFSE Women's Network
- Oldham Leadership Board
- Communities Board
- Community Safety and Cohesion Partnership
- Poverty Strategy Group - including progressing the Poverty Truth Commission work
- Food Partnership Board - which includes the food security work
- Both Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards
- Children's' Strategic Alliance
- GM Moving Local Pilot

Rochdale

Grassroots Gatherings: a regular time and a place when VCFSE organisations can come together, share updates, and make asks and offers of what they can give or share with others. Moved online in lockdown and also held four 'Family Focused' Grassroots Gatherings. There have been many examples of networking and collaboration such as the distribution of the GMCA Creative Care kits for young people in different communities across the borough.

The **Digital Tech Library Consortium** is a big success from Grassroots Gatherings. Following discussions about how some people are 'digitally excluded' as they do not have access to equipment, a brilliant group of voluntary sector partners came together with

support from Action Together. The consortium secured funding to purchase new tablets to loan out to people, with support from a Digital Champion, developed and signed a Partnership Agreement and secured funding to purchase 20 devices, attracted interest, including press coverage, and additional investment opportunities to expand the offer, hosted a Digital Inclusion Discussion Group for groups across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, and influenced a GM bid for additional funding for Digital Coordination.

Other Highlights:

- Provided partnerships support to develop a new **Disability Forum**
- Provided partnership support to develop a new **Women's Services Forum**
- Closer working with Healthwatch, Rochdale Borough Council and Heywood Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group and other VCFSE partners through **#TogetherRochdale**
- Cooperative Engagement places and spaces - creation and sharing document including with our own members and with public sector partners
- **Economic Support Network**: developing a triage tool for people in financial difficulty and frontline workers/volunteers supporting them so people can get the right input on all their key needs
- Organised a one-day workshop in November with **Adult Social Care** for a combined council staff/voluntary sector audience, focused on financial wellbeing
- Supported the **FASD Network** to develop 6 online Lunchtime Learnings sessions and an FASD Resource for Parents, Carers and Families.

Tameside

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Network: Brought together ESOL providers from Tameside with the North West ESOL Co-Ordinator to pull together ESOL materials. The materials were piloted and received good feedback from users, and will be rolled out across the North West. The network focused on COVID throughout the year, and how it affects asylum seekers and refugees, and presented to Andrew Gwynne MP, who sits on Home Office Committee

COVID Diversity Champions: Facilitated weekly meetings to bring together BAME organisations and representatives from population health and Tameside Council. This has helped improve accessibility of information, and ensure messages are shared in local communities. The group developed 100 COVID Champions and facilitated a separate meeting with representatives from black and Caribbean communities to discuss vaccine plans and comms. The group worked together to continue to ensure that messages are being shared in local communities, including translating materials, and put into the right places in the community.

Tameside Diversity Network: Co-produced strategies to improve access to healthcare services for people from communities experiencing racial inequalities. The network was established to share community partners' stories and start developing ideas to take further with system partners (CCG and Primary Care Trust). Highlight work has included planning of videos to be used in hospital, and GP staff awareness and customer service training.

Other Highlights:

- **Tameside Poverty Action Group:** Network items included Census, Ground work update, and CAB update.
- **Tameside Faiths United:** Our team supported the Committee to put on a Schools Welcome training course for Faith organisations. We also supported Faiths United in planning and admin of their AGM.
- **Tameside Children and Young people strategic meetings:** ensured VCFSE has influence, inputs and benefits from service delivery and training opportunities.
- **Parenting and Mental Health (Children and Young People):** Identified the need for increased knowledge of mental health and parenting services to better support and signpost families, children and young people to Tameside services.
- **Tameside Youth Practitioners Partnership:** Discussed formalising the partnership to be able to lever in funding, with next step to meet Youth Partnership lead and decide on a model.

Greater Manchester and 10GM

GM VCSE Leadership Group, Action Together actively contributed to the production of theJan 2020 - Commissioning Framework, Jan 2020 - Policy Paper, and September 2020: Inclusive Economy Paper. Action Together senior staff have been a conduit for the VCFSE sector on public partnerships such as GM Moving Executive; GM Reform Board; GM Recovery Coordination Group; GM Contain Cell and GM Population Health Board.

GM=EqAl: We provided senior capacity to attend and contribute to Alliance meetings and produced insight into local infrastructure involvement in equalities activities in each borough of Greater Manchester.

GM Homeless Action Network: As part of the Strategy & Support organising group, supported the delivery of two Legislative Theatre workshops on the homelessness prevention strategy for Greater Manchester. Also hosted the quarterly HAN event in December, giving people space to exchange information about support available over winter for people who are homeless, and collectively reflect on the experience of the later months of the pandemic.

Action Together is a founding partner of 10GM, and after it established its legal status in February 2019, 10GM employed its first three staff in January 2021. Action Together provides the HR function for 10GM and line manages the staff. We have actively collaborated or led the work for 10GM across the year to deliver the following programmes:

- Active Neighbourhoods
- Achieve Grants
- Answer Cancer
- FASD
- GM Food Network
- GM Moving
- Museums Volunteer Development Programme
- VCSE Leadership Group
- Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

Healthwatch

Our Healthwatch teams in Oldham and Tameside adapted their work following the initial COVID lockdown and restrictions. As with elsewhere in Action Together, this meant an end of in-person engagement work and saw an initial reduction in complaints work which then steadily increased.

Healthwatch teams took the lead in managing signposting of information, communication of health messages, and developed local insight work to understand the health impact of COVID on people with long term conditions and access issues. Teams supported our response to media queries, including following an increase in COVID cases at Tameside Hospital. Throughout we have emphasised our role to represent the interests of the people of Oldham and Tameside, and help local NHS services provide the best care and solutions for the local population.

Our Oldham Healthwatch Manager left the charity at the end of July and a recruitment of a new manager was in place, with Tamoor Tariq joining the team in early August.

Healthwatch Oldham's Annual Report can be found on their website, as can reports on COVID, digital health, and dentistry.

Healthwatch Tameside's Annual Report can be found on their website, as can reports on COVID, mental health and wellbeing, and dentistry.

Miles of Smiles

We adapted our Miles of Smiles community transport service this year, as we saw a reduction in volunteers and a deployment of those remaining into Tameside emergency response activities. We created and managed a revised COVID-safe service to assist with the local response.

In FY2020/21 Miles of Smiles completed 2,755 journeys, travelling a total of 20,966 miles. This included transporting 859 people to COVID vaccinations.

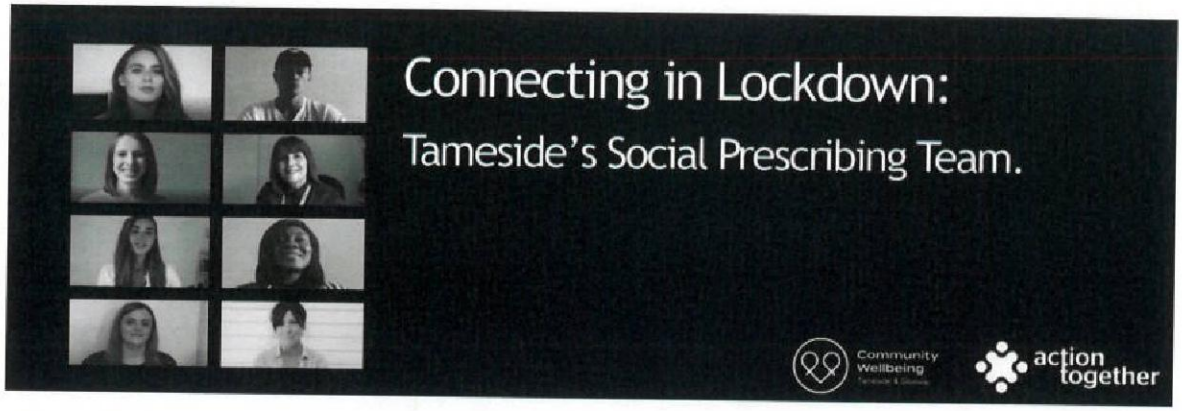
Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing teams in Oldham and Tameside were actively engaged in the emergency COVID response. Our team delivered and managed the emergency access to food in Tameside in the initial weeks, through to operating a telephone and online service for people facing difficulties. The team in Oldham managed their work through telephone and online support and actively worked as part of the deployed workforce completing Test and Trace and targeted community engagement and insight work.

The availability of community support was greatly impacted by COVID restrictions, and we worked closely with other wellbeing services to ensure that available support can be accessed and that issues around equity of access are raised and resolved.

As the difficult year progressed, we saw an increase in referrals from across the system, as well as an increase in self-referrals. We particularly saw a large increase of people needing support with housing, loneliness, and isolation.

Tameside team produced a video title Connecting in Lockdown to promote the social prescribing service.



Our Tameside Social Prescribing manager was interviewed by the Department for Health and Social Care to promote social prescribing on social media. The video has been viewed over 750,000 times by people across the UK, with Action Together linked and promoted by the video. Watch the video on Facebook here.

Oldham Social Prescribing staff worked with Oldham Cares ahead of introducing the Elemental recording and reporting system for the Thriving Communities service. The whole SP team has been trained in Elemental and the roll out has been communicated across the whole of the health and social care system.

Elemental allows engagement and referrals from GP's to be more streamlined. EMIS (the GP clinical system) and Elemental are able to talk to each other, meaning that a referral to social prescribing can be done in a few clicks and even while the patient is with the GP. The GP will also be able to see that the patient has engaged with a Link Worker and the outcomes the individual has had from the support of Social Prescribing. Professionals who don't use EMIS will also be able to refer directly using a portal.

Spotlight on... Oldham VCFSE Women's Network

In the early weeks of the pandemic there was concern from a number of Oldham's Women's Groups about the impact of the pandemic on women and a desire to improve collaboration between groups.

We tasked ourselves with setting up an online network space for women's VCFSE groups in Oldham to support their pandemic response work for women.

We consulted with local groups and partners and set up a bi-weekly online networking space for women's groups to share their insight, experiences, the work that they were doing to support women through the pandemic, and to explore how they could support each other with the work they were delivering.

By creating this space to come together the network has:

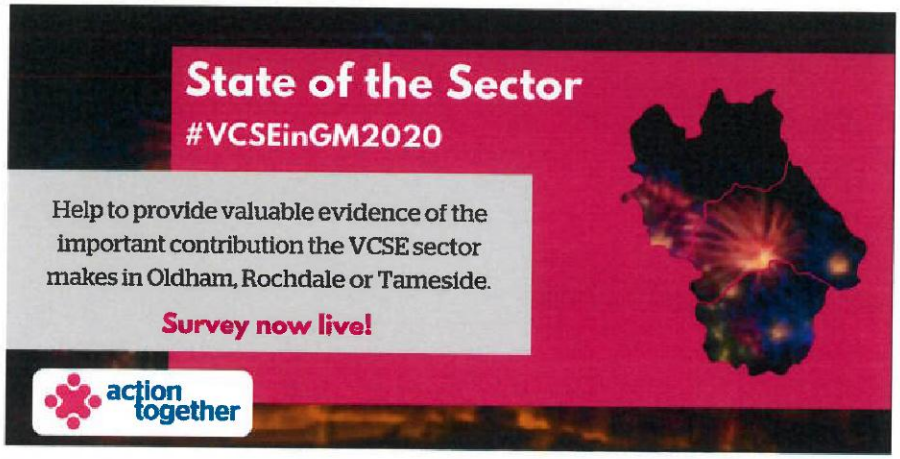
- agreed a set of principles for the way they work
- identified the key issues they were responding to through the pandemic
- improved operational collaboration to improve outcomes for women, including a directory of services featuring all the network members' offer for women
- gathered insight of lived experience of the impact of domestic abuse and the gaps in support and service for women, especially those from minority communities
- successfully lobbied for grant funding via Oldham's Community Safety Partnership and invested £50,000 through the women's network to invest in the capacity of network members to support women who are experiencing Domestic Abuse.



The success of these projects, and the grant investment approach meant that during March 2021 we were able to agree £100,000 to be invested through the network for Domestic abuse support for 2021/22.

Throughout 2020/21 we were also able to connect offers of donations from local business and charities through to the network members, including brand new clothing for women and their families via NBrown/JD Williams and digital devices via The Good Things Foundation.

COLLABORATION



The **State of the Sector survey** was a major part of Action Together's collaborative work in 2020, as we worked with 10GM partners and Salford University to collect surveys from our members in all three boroughs. Every member of staff was involved in some way, including in the final push to collect survey responses, with our Tameside team collecting more surveys than any other borough in Greater Manchester. Following the survey, we held three locality focus groups in each of our boroughs and facilitated cross-GM thematic focus groups.

We were members of the research steering group, working with Salford University to develop the final report from the findings, with the full launch due in FY 2021/22, including a cross-GM report, locality report for each borough of GM, and an online launch event. We will share the surveys with all our members and feed the findings into our ongoing strategic work.

In each locality we proactively established **inequality focused action**, strategically calling and contributing to equality impact assessments in relation to the emergency COVID response. In addition, new collaborative spaces have been developed to bring community leaders, groups, and public sector partners together. These include:

- **Oldham** - Equalities Panel; faith leaders/council of mosques action groups; crisis food group; women's network.
- **Rochdale** - Community and Faith Group; developed and facilitated an Equalities Assembly report publicised; food solutions group to ensure access to culturally appropriate food

- **Tameside** - BAME Communities weekly group; homeless partnership in Tameside; Refugees, Asylum Seekers action in partnership with Infinity Initiatives and DMNW

We also facilitated joint action on some pre-COVID collaboration work including the Poverty Truth Commission, Refugee And Asylum Seekers network, and Cooperative Engagement work.

In Oldham we co-led the Community Champions Programme, with funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG). The purpose of the programme is 'to support people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19) including those from an ethnic minority background, disabled people and others to follow safer behaviours and reduce the impact of the virus on themselves and those around them'. Oldham has been awarded £500,000 through the fund and £300,000 will be invested via Action Together directly to the VCFSE sector.

The programme is developing community capacity which supports this strategy but is also building resilience, trust and insight to inform the COVID response and recovery work:

- Expanding the Community Engagement Network through small and medium-sized investments to the Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector
- Identifying gaps in current engagement strategy and routes
- Co-designing and developing training and targeted communications tools for VCFSE and community leaders, and using more culturally appropriate and accessible communications channels
- Capturing community insight in order to inform our engagement strategy and behaviour change

In the first two months we invested £120,000 of grants to community anchor organisations.

The first **Rochdale Equalities Report** was published following on from the borough's first Equalities Assembly, held in July 2020. The assembly included a series of conversations to help improve our understanding of inequalities and how they can be reduced. The Assembly was a partnership piece of work between Action Together, Rochdale Borough Council and other local organisations including Healthwatch Rochdale.

62 participants took part in discussions on a number of key thematic topics. The assembly included presentations from Public Health on 'Reducing Disparities and Inequalities' and Healthwatch Rochdale on 'What people are telling us about Covid 19'. The report outlines the main themes explored in each conversation and identifies additional topics for future Assemblies.

The Equalities Report was shared with key decision makers and shared via the Rochdale Borough Partnership Communications Group #TogetherRochdale. Read the report here.

Rochdale team continued to hold **Equalities Assemblies** throughout the year.

A key piece of work we completed was supporting the Food Solutions Network to develop the **Community Warehouse** in Rochdale.

The FSN was established in response to the COVID pandemic, facilitating over 20 community, voluntary, faith and social enterprise sector organisations, alongside statutory partners, to improve access to food for the people of Rochdale Borough.

The Community Warehouse is a central distribution hub that can receive bulk donations and supplies for redistribution to voluntary sector groups, allowing smaller food providers to take advantage of surplus donation schemes.

The warehouse is stocked with food and essential supplies, but also economic, health and wellbeing support resources created by other charities and partners (such as Family Art Packs, New Baby packs), recognising that food is a 'gateway' to whole person support.

Our initial development offer supported the set-up, governance, funding, and COVID-safe practices of the Community Warehouse. The team then set up dedicated Twitter and Facebook pages to engage warehouse users, partners, and volunteers, and funded 25 groups to produce and distribute 1,154 Care Packages to people across the borough.



Spotlight on... Rochdale Community Warehouse

The Community Warehouse was developed and set up to help combat food poverty and crisis in the borough during the COVID pandemic. The warehouse is a central distribution hub stocked with food and essential items for redistribution to voluntary sector groups and individuals to access food without deprivation.

Food donated at supermarkets is already going to support the excellent work of the Food Banks and pantries in the borough, but many other organisations struggle to get food for their local families or individuals struggling to afford food - so this additional option is a lifeline for the groups it supports.

Our task was to continue to provide this much need service in the borough. Action Together use a team of volunteers to run the warehouse alongside a dedicated member of staff. In addition, we offer a Street Ambassador Programme to help bring donations in the warehouse via local street collections by a team of street ambassadors.

The warehouse not only stocks much needed tinned, boxed, dried food but also has toiletries, baby products, PPE, Care Packs including creative packs, hygiene packs, activity packs and occasional clothing and bedding donations.

The warehouse is open Monday and Wednesdays each week for groups to collect good and each week groups send an up-to-date stock sheet to order goods. The goods are picked and packed by our trusted volunteers and then groups call down to pick up their goods.

Voluntary organisations, statutory bodies and Action Together in Rochdale are working together to tackle food crisis for families and individuals struggling to afford food. We are working together to tackle the stigma and shame around food poverty and access to appropriate food for those isolated in Rochdale. All these groups also come together on a monthly basis through the Food Solution Network to discuss in a co-ordinated way how to tackle food poverty and safe access to appropriate food. In addition, we also feed into the GM Food Network.

The Warehouse now has eight regularly active volunteers contributing 100 volunteer hours per month and supporting over 300 families and individual people. 32 different groups have used the Warehouse, with individual items to the value of £25,000 and goods to the value of £20,190 distributed.

INVESTMENT

- **Distributed £862,287 in direct investment to 587 applications from the local VCFSE sector**
- **Launched the COVID Community Response Fund, investing £242,640 in 297 local organisations**
- **Raised £58,150 through public JustGiving appeals to contribute to local COVID responses**
- **Directly supported 252 groups in developing funding applications**

Action Together worked with public sector partners to **secure additional resources** to support the VCFSE emergency COVID response. Before any national funds were available, we had developed and launched the **COVID Community Response Fund**. The fund is available for Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside & Glossop groups from the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector working on a COVID-19 Community Response that meet either of these priorities:

- We want to connect local community action and help to co-ordinate efforts in response to the needs of residents. We are especially interested in funding good neighbour, mutual aid and social action projects that directly help people affected by the effects of the virus
- We also want to support the community, voluntary, faith and social enterprise sector to respond with new ideas that help, connect or support people through this crisis

Groups could apply for grants up to £200, or up to £1,000.

Building on our Community Response Fund work in Oldham, we were able to work with public sector partners and agree the pooling of the different local grant pots available for this financial year (circa £180,000) into one single grant fund managed by Action Together - **The Community Recovery Fund**. Launched in September we administered £26,000 in September alone.

We worked with the Oldham System to develop grant investment through the Covid Test and Trace national funding coming into the Local Authority and agreed £75,000 in grant investments to the VCFSE to support the community engagement and local testing and tracing work.

Working with the partners in the Oldham Community Bronze we also ensured that the majority of the DEFRA Grant coming into the Local Authority has been invested in the VCFSE organisations that are providing the bulk of the Humanitarian Assistance work.

We continued to support the VCFSE sector in Rochdale by distributing grants through the Community Response Fund - Equalities Focus, Places of Worship Reopening fund and FASD Small grants.

We continued to support the VCFSE sector in Tameside by sourcing funding and distributing to VCFSE groups. We released the **Social Infrastructure Funds (SIF)** (between £10,000-£25,000) which replaced the Community Wellbeing Investments in order to support VCFSE organisations to deliver services to meet changing needs within Tameside communities as the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis becomes clearer. Of the 29 groups who expressed an interest 27 met with our team to Community Development Officers to help them to develop their proposals so that they met the new criteria and could be delivered safely.

As the year progressed and our areas moved through different stages of COVID restrictions, we amended the Rochdale CRF to the **Respond, Repair, Recover** fund, aimed at helping groups reopen, and in Tameside moved the process back to Microgrants.

We met with the National Lottery on a regular basis to ensure local groups have a fair access and best chance to secure national emergency monies. We also worked actively with Forever Manchester, who hold the National Emergencies money.

We also introduced fundraising appeals via **JustGiving** for each of the three localities (https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/donate). We produced local giving videos and social media campaigns in partnership with Oldham Council to help promote local giving: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=693045064841223&extid=ddX7xjGGoZmAsmmV



We received and managed the donations of money and goods to the VCFSE, ranging from GM funds to purchase refrigeration for foodbanks through to pallets of items delivered by businesses in Oldham. This required a significant logistical operation and management team effort including increased financial processing and management. In total, **£58,150 was donated by the public through JustGiving.**

We surveyed our members to assess their challenges and needs from us and local authorities. The overwhelming response was a request for more funding, funding information, and support. As new funds became available, often with short deadlines, we introduced our Funding ebulletin. This is distributed fortnightly on Mondays to all members and has seen an increase in visits to our Funding pages and in applications for funding.

Following consultation with our members in Q1, we **reformatted our Find Funding webpage** to make it more accessible and include more funding on the page. The page is now regularly the most visited on our website and has led to an increase in funding applications.



We **developed the support available to our members** with funding applications and developed a funding bid mentor programme. As groups looked to reopen under the spring roadmap out of lockdown, we prepared for a month-long funding campaign in April FY2021/22, with the aim of promoting our funds, fundraising ideas, and our funding support. This Action Together-wide campaign will be the first of our quarterly campaigns around different priorities for FY2021/22.

It should be noted that we **distributed and handled applications in a far larger number compared to previous years.** We did this with the same capacity and resource as previous years, and a thank you must go to our team for their hard work in promoting funds, supporting groups in applications, managing funding pots and distributing investment across the three boroughs. This money has gone straight to grassroots groups making a difference through COVID at a time when it was most needed.

Future plans

We are proud to have been part of the emergency response to COVID in each of our three localities, and in the response across Greater Manchester. The VCFSE and the broader social infrastructure that connects people and creates a sense of community has been unquestionably highlighted as critical to our society. Action Together will work hard to **ensure the value and important role the sector plays is not forgotten** and that significant step change in the resourcing and capabilities of the sector are developed alongside these thanks. We will use the upcoming State of the Sector research and build on our own insights to continue advocating for the local VCFSE.

People from across the sector stepped up and took on responsibility to respond to the needs of our communities over the last year, and we must recognize this by **supporting individual, staff, and sector resilience**. We need to focus on the wellbeing of our collective workforces, with flexibility and understanding of what people have faced and continue to face. We need to drive forward large-scale organisational development to ensure the sector can transform and adapt its offer for the benefit of a c hanging country.

We must **talk about inequality and injustice** in our society. COVID exacerbated existing issues, and we want to take action to tackle this internally within Action Together, as a VCFSE sector, and across system boundaries to address the deep roots of inequality that persist. We care about amplifying the voices of people that often go unheard, and this will be essential if collectively we are to realise the recommendations of the recent GM Equalities Commission report.

We must **recognise and thank** people for the compassion and solidarity shown over recent months, and we plan to do this publicly in celebrations of all forms of volunteering. We will work to recognise that contribution in the way we work and provide ways to make it easier for people to give to others - whether that's in their time, resources or connections.

This is a major opportunity to re-set and build the society we want but that takes skills, time and energy from a wide range of people. Partnership working has been central to the response to the pandemic, with key connections being made inside and outside the sector. We must **build on our connections**, and our role as facilitators and system connectors is essential. We will further develop our place-based working methods to respond to the needs of communities across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.

Financial review

Funds at 31 March 2021 amounted to £3,826,491 of which £2,796,790 were restricted. Expenditure in the year met the objectives that were required by the principal funding sources, as described in their funding agreements.

Restricted funds held at the end of the year have been carried forward for the future support of specific projects. Action Together recognises that it is responsible and accountable for public funds. It further recognises that it needs clarity and transparency in demonstrating how these funds are managed and, in particular, the level of funds that it judges appropriate to hold in reserve.

The Trustees have established a reserves policy which requires:

- Reserves are maintained at a level which ensures that Action Together has the ability to meet its ongoing commitments with sufficient reserves to cover a minimum of six month's running costs, redundancy costs and core committed costs
- A proportion of reserves are maintained in a readily realisable form
- The calculation of the reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle and will take into account:
    1. Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
    2. Planned activity level
    3. Organisation's commitments

The reserves fund is managed and monitored at each Finance Sub-Group meeting and reported back to the full Board of Trustees within the financial reporting procedures.

The calculated reserves fund will be reviewed quarterly to ensure it takes account of changing circumstances.

The reserves position as at 31 March 2021 is as follows:

Total requirement of six months running costs, redundancy and committed core costs: £424,518

Total unrestricted reserves, cash and investments (net of tangible fixed assets): £858,694

The trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity, projections, cash flows and reserves and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Action Together CIO
Charity registration number	1165512
Principal office	95-97 Penny Meadow Ashton-Under-Lyne OL6 6EP
The trustees	A. Ball R. Farnworth C. Guereca A. Parkes J. Yates K. Lowes A. Wiggans J. Rehmen C. Gregory M. Sarwar R. Yaseen J. Mellor
Auditor	John Alderdice & Sons T/A The Bailey Group 30 Yoden Way Peterlee Co. Durham SR8 1AL
Bankers	Unity Trust Bank plc 4 Brindley Place Birmingham B1 2HP CCLA Investment Management Senator House 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET Blackrock Investment Management (UK) Ltd 12 Throgmorton Avenue London EC2N 2DL Castlefield 9th Floor 111 Piccadilly Manchester M1 2HY

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 18 October 2021 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Roger Farnworth
Chair

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Action Together CIO

Year ended 31 March 2021

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Action Together CIO (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the statement of financial activities, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charity to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's members, as a body, in accordance with section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Christopher Bailey (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of
John Alderdice & Sons T/a The Bailey Group
Chartered Accountants & statutory auditor
30 Yoden Way
Peterlee
Co. Durham
SR8 1AL

18 October 2021

Action Together CIO

Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2021 Unrestricted funds £	2021 Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	2020 Total funds £
Income					
Funded charitable activities	**4**	–	4,691,156	4,691,156	3,582,796
Activities for generating funds	**5**	55,866	–	55,866	38,477
Investment income	**6**	6,761	–	6,761	12,673
Total income		62,627	4,691,156	4,753,783	3,633,946
Expenditure					
Management and administration	**7**	541,711	–	541,711	611,688
Expenditure on charitable activities	**8,9**	–	3,944,894	3,944,894	2,931,400
Central administration and management costs	**10**	(477,033)	–	(477,033)	(577,566)
Total expenditure		64,678	3,944,894	4,009,572	2,965,522
Net gains/losses on fixed assets	**11**	65,859	128,147	194,006	(86,296)
Net income and net movement in funds		63,808	874,409	938,217	582,128
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		965,893	1,922,381	2,888,274	2,306,146
Total funds carried forward		1,029,701	2,796,790	3,826,491	2,888,274

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 50 to 60 form part of these financial statements.

Action Together CIO

Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	16	171,007	168,344
Investments	17	1,320,953	1,126,487
		1,491,960	1,294,831
Current assets			
Debtors	18	174,166	95,990
Cash at bank and in hand		2,693,600	1,687,159
		2,867,766	1,783,149
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	533,235	189,706
Net current assets		2,334,531	1,593,443
Total assets less current liabilities		3,826,491	2,888,274
Net assets		3,826,491	2,888,274
Funds of the charity			
Restricted funds		2,796,790	1,922,381
Unrestricted funds		1,029,701	965,893
Total charity funds	21	3,826,491	2,888,274

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 18 October 2021, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

A. Parkes
Trustee

The notes on pages 50 to 60 form part of these financial statements.

Action Together CIO

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income	938,217	582,128
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	11,540	7,992
Net gains/losses on fixed assets	(194,006)	86,296
Other interest receivable and similar income	(6,761)	(12,673)
Accrued expenses	78,264	7,670
Changes in:		
Trade and other debtors	(78,176)	435,210
Trade and other creditors	265,265	(921,803)
Cash generated from operations	1,014,343	184,820
Interest received	6,761	12,673
Net cash from operating activities	1,021,104	197,493
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(14,203)	(14,961)
Purchases of other investments	(2,647)	(5,050)
Proceeds from sale of other investments	2,187	137,527
Net cash (used in)/from investing activities	(14,663)	117,516
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	1,006,441	315,009
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,687,159	1,372,150
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	2,693,600	1,687,159

The notes on pages 50 to 60 form part of these financial statements.

1. General information

The charity is a public benefit entity and a registered charity in England and Wales and is unincorporated. The address of the principal office is 95-97 Penny Meadow, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 6EP.

2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Charities Act 2011.

3. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

Going concern

There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported. These estimates and judgements are continually reviewed and are based on experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal, and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

Incoming resources

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity, it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.

3. **Accounting policies** *(continued)*

Incoming resources *(continued)*

- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it will be regarded as restricted.

- receipts received during the year which are not to be expended until after the balance sheet date are not recognised as income for the year and are included in income deferred (note 19).

Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities.

- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis.

Tangible assets

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	-	25% straight line
Motor vehicles	-	25% straight line
Equipment	-	25% straight line

The fair value of freehold property will be reviewed on an annual basis.

3. **Accounting policies** *(continued)*

Investments

Unlisted equity investments are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently measured at fair value. If fair value cannot be reliably measured, assets are measured at cost less impairment.

Listed investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value being recognised in income or expenditure.

Impairment of fixed assets

A review for indicators of impairment is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

For the purposes of impairment testing, when it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, an estimate is made of the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. The cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group of assets that includes the asset and generates cash inflows that largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets.

Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Where investments in shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in income and expenditure. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised under the appropriate heading in the statement of financial activities in which the initial gain was recognised.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

Defined contribution plans

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense in the period in which the related service is provided. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that the prepayment will lead to a reduction in future payments or a cash refund.

When contributions are not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the end of the reporting date in which the employees render the related service, the liability is measured on a discounted present value basis. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as an expense in the period in which it arises.

4. Funded charitable activities

	Restricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Core Infrastructure	1,109,168	1,109,168	892,231	892,231
Healthwatch	307,653	307,653	311,930	311,930
Investments in VCFSE	1,661,560	1,661,560	1,171,875	1,171,875
Social Prescribing/Community wellbeing	1,140,363	1,140,363	920,715	920,715
Greater Manchester Projects	126,358	126,358	128,976	128,976
Big Local	105,525	105,525	77,069	77,069
Covid Response	240,529	240,529	80,000	80,000
	4,691,156	4,691,156	3,582,796	3,582,796

The project split of development, volunteering and partnerships income as shown in the 2020 financial statements has been reclassified as core infrastructure for the current year.

5. Activities for generating funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Accounts and payroll services	25,196	25,196	38,477	38,477
Lloyds core activity grant	30,000	30,000	–	–
Miscellaneous	670	670	–	–
	55,866	55,866	38,477	38,477

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Bank interest	1,291	1,291	5,284	5,284
Dividends	5,470	5,470	7,389	7,389
	6,761	6,761	12,673	12,673

6. Investment income *(continued)*

In addition income on investments held within the Action Oldham Fund and the Tameside 4 Good Fund have been included in the income of those funds:-

	2021	2020
	£	£
Bank interest and dividends	24,076	25,653

7. Management and administration

	Unrestricted Funds	**Total Funds 2021**	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Management and administration costs	541,711	541,711	611,688	611,688

	2021	2020
	£	£
Staff costs	371,995	419,767
Premises and office costs	144,371	165,993
Income generation costs	–	5,445
Irrecoverable Vat	11,934	11,543
Investment income management fees	1,870	948
Depreciation	11,541	7,992
	541,711	611,688

Premises and office costs include audit fees £7,750 (2020 : £6,720).

8. Expenditure on charitable activities by fund type

	Restricted Funds	**Total Funds 2021**	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£
Core Infrastructure	781,569	781,569	653,266	653,266
Healthwatch	227,743	227,743	261,644	261,644
Investments in VCFSE	1,064,311	1,064,311	761,195	761,195
Social Prescribing/Community Wellbeing	994,154	994,154	640,152	640,152
Greater Manchester Projects	119,011	119,011	11,628	11,628
Big Local	40,372	40,372	25,206	25,206
Covid Response	240,701	240,701	731	731
Support costs	477,033	477,033	577,578	577,578
	3,944,894	3,944,894	2,931,400	2,931,400

9. Expenditure on charitable activities by activity type

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	**Total funds 2021 £**	Total fund 2020 £
Core Infrastructure	781,569	231,984	1,013,553	929,135
Healthwatch	227,743	73,354	301,097	316,932
Investments in VCFSE	1,064,311	51,733	1,116,044	869,564
Social Prescribing/Community Wellbeing	994,154	103,219	1,097,373	731,976
Greater Manchester Projects	119,011	7,576	126,587	53,332
Big Local	40,372	9,167	49,539	29,606
Covid Response	240,701	–	240,701	855
	3,467,861	477,033	3,944,894	2,931,400

10. Central administration and management costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Costs recovered from administration and management of restricted funds	(477,033)	(477,033)	(577,566)	(577,566)

11. Net gains/losses on fixed assets

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**
Gains/(losses) on listed investments	65,859	128,147	194,006

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Gains/(losses) on listed investments	(23,120)	(63,176)	(86,296)

12. Net income

Net income is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2021 £	2020 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	11,540	7,992

13. Staff costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,896,817	1,625,361
Social security costs	167,716	144,604
Employer contributions to pension plans	104,401	89,129
Other employee benefits	–	14,098
	2,168,934	1,873,192

The average head count of employees during the year was 73 (2020: 65). The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year is analysed as follows:

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
Direct charitable activities	62	54
Office and administration	11	11
	73	65

The number of employees whose remuneration for the year fell within the following bands, were:

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
£60,000 to £69,999	1	1

14. Trustee remuneration and expenses

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year.

15. Volunteers

Action Together supports people to volunteer in their area, and assists local organisations in developing volunteer programmes, policies and roles. Residents of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside can register with our volunteer brokerage service, and we will match them with local volunteering opportunities.

As the recognised volunteer service for the three boroughs, we organised emergency volunteering in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included adapting our volunteer registration service to make it easier for people to quickly register online, in order to capitalise on the wave of public support early in the first lockdown. We also developed guidelines, training and advice for volunteers to remain safe and protect the people that they were supporting.

In the last year:
- 2,175 people registered to volunteer with Action Together- 1,972 volunteers were matched with roles
- An average of 214 people were actively volunteering in their community each month

Action Together volunteer roles included doorstep donations and collection schemes, delivery of PPE, community engagement in supporting social distancing and test and trace messaging, support at vaccination centres, and volunteering at foodbanks, food distribution hubs and community hubs.

16. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Equipment £	**Total £**
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2020	150,000	71,143	24,299	28,626	274,068
Additions	–	462	–	13,741	14,203
Disposals	–	(32,525)	–	(17,663)	(50,188)
At 31 March 2021	150,000	39,080	24,299	24,704	238,083
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2020	–	57,792	24,299	23,633	105,724
Charge for the year	–	5,365	–	6,175	11,540
Disposals	–	(32,525)	–	(17,663)	(50,188)
At 31 March 2021	–	30,632	24,299	12,145	67,076
Carrying amount					
At 31 March 2021	150,000	8,448	–	12,559	171,007
At 31 March 2020	150,000	13,351	–	4,993	168,344

The property was valued at March 31, 2017 by Waltons Property Services Limited at £150,000 at open market value. The Trustees have reviewed this valuation and believe this continues to represent the fair value of the property at March 31, 2021.

17. Investments

	Listed investments £	Other investments £	**Total £**
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2020	1,101,487	25,000	1,126,487
Additions	2,647	–	2,647
Disposals	–	(2,187)	(2,187)
Fair value movements	194,006	–	194,006
At 31 March 2021	1,298,140	22,813	1,320,953
Impairment			
At 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	–	–	–
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2021	1,298,140	22,813	1,320,953
At 31 March 2020	1,101,487	25,000	1,126,487

Financial assets held at fair value

All listed investments are held in the United Kingdom and are incorporated at fair value at March 31, 2021.

18. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accounts receivable	160,483	68,983
Prepayments	8,551	17,099
Other debtors	5,132	9,908
	174,166	95,990

19. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts payable	7,875	8,110
Accruals	121,491	43,227
Social security and other taxes	88,669	78,185
Income deferred	315,200	60,184
	533,235	189,706

Income deferred is explained in the Accounting Policies under Incoming resources.

During the year the charity received a legacy of £200,000. These are restricted funds and are to be distributed in the form of grants throughout Tameside.

20. Pensions and other post retirement benefits

Defined contribution plans

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £104,401 (2020: £89,129).

21. Analysis of charitable funds

Unrestricted funds

	At 1 Apr 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	**At 31 Mar 2021 £**
General funds	965,893	62,627	(64,678)	(77,000)	65,859	952,701
Designated Fund	–	–	–	77,000	–	77,000
	965,893	62,627	(64,678)	–	65,859	1,029,701

	At 1 Apr 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	At 31 Mar 2020 £
General funds	940,822	51,150	(34,123)	31,164	(23,120)	965,893
Designated Fund	–	–	–	–	–	–
	940,822	51,150	(34,123)	31,164	(23,120)	965,893

Restricted funds

	At 1 Apr 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	**At 31 Mar 2021 £**
Direct charitable activities	1,922,381	4,691,156	(3,944,894)	–	128,147	2,796,790

	At 1 Apr 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Gains and losses £	At 31 Mar 2020 £
Direct charitable activities	1,365,325	3,582,797	(2,931,401)	(31,164)	(63,176)	1,922,381

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	**Total Funds 2021 £**
Tangible fixed assets	171,007	–	171,007
Investments	368,427	952,526	1,320,953
Current assets	708,302	2,159,464	2,867,766
Creditors less than 1 year	(218,035)	(315,200)	(533,235)
Net assets	1,029,701	2,796,790	3,826,491

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	168,344	–	168,344
Investments	304,682	821,805	1,126,487
Current assets	622,389	1,160,760	1,783,149
Creditors less than 1 year	(129,522)	(60,184)	(189,706)
Net assets	965,893	1,922,381	2,888,274

23. Going concern

The Trustees have assessed the current financial standing of the organisation with reference to current activity projections, cash flows and reserves as well as within the context of the Covid pandemic and its impact on the organisation and have concluded that the charity is a going concern.

24. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 Apr 2020 £	Cash flows £	**At 31 Mar 2021 £**
Cash at bank and in hand	1,687,159	1,006,441	2,693,600